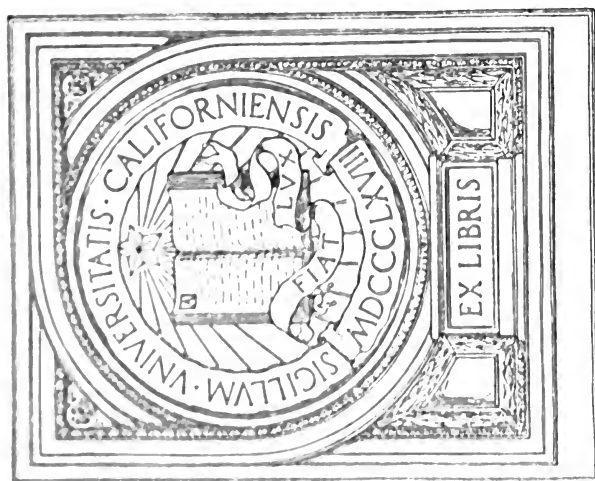


DAYS: AND: NIGHTS  
IN: THE: TROPICS



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Yours Truly  
W. H. Davis.

# DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

*William Richard* BY  
[DEAN] HARRIS, 1847-

TORONTO  
MORANG & CO., LIMITED  
1905

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TO  
CHARLES STUART MURRAY, M.D.,  
WITH THE WARMEST ASSURANCE OF MY DEEP  
PERSONAL REGARD AND ESTEEM



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
A FEW WORDS TO THE READER . . . . .	1
<i>CHAPTER I</i>	
THE AZORES . . . . .	5
<i>CHAPTER II</i>	
"ISLE OF BEAUTY" . . . . .	11
<i>CHAPTER III</i>	
FURNAS AND THE GARDEN OF THE GODS . . . .	17
<i>CHAPTER IV</i>	
IN THE AZORES . . . . .	25
<i>CHAPTER V</i>	
THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES . . . . .	33
<i>CHAPTER VI</i>	
GUADELOUPE—MOTHER OF THE PINE-APPLE . . .	41
<i>CHAPTER VII</i>	
LA BREA—THE LAKE OF PITCH . . . . .	51
<i>CHAPTER VIII</i>	
MARTINIQUE AND ST. PIERRE . . . . .	61

# CONTENTS

<i>CHAPTER IX</i>	PAGE
THE CITY OF THE DEAD, . . . . .	71
 <i>CHAPTER X</i>	
IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS . . . . .	85
 <i>CHAPTER XI</i>	
THE CATHEDRAL AND NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICO	95
 <i>CHAPTER XII</i>	
RUINS OF MILTA—PYRAMID OF CHOLULA—IN MYSTER- IOUS MEXICO . . . . .	105
 <i>CHAPTER XIII</i>	
THE BULL FIGHT IN MEXICO CITY . . . . .	117
 <i>CHAPTER XIV</i>	
PANAMA—FEVER-HAUNTED ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD .	125
 <i>CHAPTER XV</i>	
A MYSTERIOUS LAND . . . . .	137
 <i>CHAPTER XVI</i>	
YUCATAN AND CHIAPAS—LAND OF GHOSTS . . .	143
 <i>CHAPTER XVII</i>	
A CAMPAIGN OF HEROISM—MARCH OF THE SPANIARDS TO HONDURAS . . . . .	153



# CONTENTS

<i>CHAPTER XVIII</i>	PAGE
HONDURAS—ON THE WAY TO COPAN . . . . .	163
 <i>CHAPTER XIX</i>	
IN THE HEART OF OLD HONDURAS . . . . .	171
 <i>CHAPTER XX</i>	
COPAN—THE PHANTOM CITY . . . . .	181
 <i>CHAPTER XXI</i>	
FROM COPAN TO THE REGION OF MYSTERY . . . . .	189
 <i>CHAPTER XXII</i>	
NICARAGUA—A LAND ACQUAINTED WITH AFFLICTION . . . . .	197
 <i>CHAPTER XXIII</i>	
“IN THE BRAVE OLD DAYS” . . . . .	203
 <i>CHAPTER XXIV</i>	
WHERE THE BLOOD OF RACES COMMINGLES . . . . .	211
 <i>CHAPTER XXV</i>	
FROM THE TOWER OF LEON CATHEDRAL . . . . .	219
INDEX . . . . .	227



## ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAIT OF DEAN HARRIS . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
CITY OF PONTA DELGADA . . . . .	FACING PAGE 11
CITY OF VILLA FRANCA, BUILT ON THE SIGHT OF THE ANCIENT TOWN . . . . .	19
DRESS WORN IN THE AZORES SHOWING CAPOTES AND CARAPUCAS . . . . .	29
MONT PELEE IN ERUPTION, MAY, 1902, MARTINIQUE . .	68
FROM ORANGE HILL, LOOKING NORTH-EAST OVER DEAD ST. PIERRE TO MONT PELEE, MARTINIQUE . .	80
STATUE OF GUATEMOZIN, LAST AND NOBLEST OF AZTEC EM- PERORS, PASEO DE LA REFORMA, MEXICO CITY .	92
PLAZA AND CHURCH OF SANTO DOMINGO, MEXICO CITY .	105
THE CITY OF PANAMA, CAPITAL OF THE NEW REPUBLIC, AND ITS HARBOUR, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN . . . . .	125
WHERE SHIPS WILL SAIL THROUGH A MOUNTAIN. THE FAMOUS CULEBRA CUT, FINISHED DEPTH 330 FEET (S.E.), PANAMA CANAL . . . . .	129
MONUMENT OF COPAN AND MAYA SECRET WRITINGS ON LITHIC SHAFTS . . . . .	164
MONUMENT OF COPAN AND MAYA SECRET WRITINGS ON LITHIC SHAFTS . . . . .	186



## A FEW WORDS TO THE READER

AFTER years of roaming through strange lands, in the byways and trails outside the lines of travel, the man who has kept a record of his experiences ought to have something worth the telling, and ought also to be able to correct erroneous statements and re-arrange some popular opinions made and formed of these strange lands and their peoples. Whether these experiences warrant the labour and expense involved in the preparation of a work of this kind, the readers will form their own opinions. But here I may be permitted to say something about old and popular impressions left on our minds by traditions and legends touching the Indian and the Spaniard. There are no redskins; there is no red race on our continent. None of the tribes, unless painted, have a red colour. There exists but one characteristic common to all these Indians, and that is the colour of their skin, the ground of which is yellow. The shades may vary from a dark, brownish yellow to an olive, pale yellow, but they are never red.

There was not, and there is not now, a free and noble savage. Dryden when he wrote,

“Free as when God first made man  
When wild in wood the noble savage ran,”

had probably never seen a savage and knew nothing

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

of their lives. The savage is not free. He is the slave of childish and often of brutal superstitions; of an unwritten tribal law which compels him at times to undergo frightful ordeals, to endure untold hardships when on the warpath, and to expect the horrors of scalping and mutilation if captured by his enemy. He is filthy in his habits and atrociously cruel to his fellow-men, whom he assassinates or defeats in battle. He knows nothing of honour or nobility, and, unaided by civilized man, cannot lift himself above his degradation. There is, in the annals of the human race, no record of any savage tribe or nation ascending by itself from savagery to barbarism and from barbarism to civilization. The record is all the other way. Byron was right when he wrote,

“This is the moral of all human tales;  
’Tis but the sad rehearsal of the past.  
First freedom, then glory; when that fails,  
Wealth, vice, corruption, barbarism at last.  
And history with all her volumes vast  
Hath but one page.”

A savage is a savage. A high material civilization can only be developed in temperate regions. In tropical and torrid zones, the great heat and humidity, the abundance of fruits and vegetable food and man’s few wants, kill all energy and ambition and unfit him for hard and continuous work. We must not judge the people of these lands by our standards.

A republican form of government is not suited

## A FEW WORDS TO THE READER

to the temperament and character of the inhabitants of tropical regions. In overturning completely and at once a monarchic edifice built upon a Christian foundation, the mixed races of Central and South America have not succeeded, after experimenting for eighty years, in creating a modern state or nation organized on the republican model of the United States of America. Central America is not yet ripe for parliamentary institutions. The states are not educated to local self-government and they have not yet produced leaders.

History and tradition shamefully libelled Spain when they charged that heroic nation with cruelty to the Indians. The best friend the American Indian ever had was the Spaniard. Adolf Bandelier, author and archæologist, and Professor Charles F. Lummis, of the University of California, historian and antiquarian, are the best and most eminent living authorities on the Spanish conquest and the aboriginal tribes of the two Americas. In his "Spanish Pioneers" Mr. Lummis writes :—

"The legislation of Spain on behalf of the Indians everywhere was incomparably more extensive, more comprehensive, more systematic, and more humane than that of Great Britain, the colonies, and the United States all combined. One of the most wonderful things about this Spanish pioneering was the humane and progressive spirit which marked it from first to last. Histories of the sort long current speak of the valiant nation as cruel to the Indians, but in truth the record of Spain in that

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

respect puts us to the blush." Now listen to Mr. Bandelier:—

"It is due to the generous and manly laws made by Spain more than three hundred years ago that our most interesting and advanced Indians, the Pueblos, enjoy full security in their lands, while nearly all other tribes have been, time after time, driven from lands our government had by solemn contract given them."

The common saying among the New England settlers that "the only good Indian was a dead Indian," embodied the national sentiment towards the unfortunate Indians. The treatment of the tribes followed the sentiment. The Indian was pushed back, and if he resisted the invasion of his lands he was shot. In Spanish America to-day the Indians are in numbers practically what they were at the conquest. They are Christians and civilized, and are eligible to any office in the state, the church or the army. "In two hundred years we of the north," writes Mr. Lummis, "will be classifying, and articulating, and lecturing on the bones of the prehistoric Indian, while all through South and Central America the Indian will be cultivating the land and increasing in numbers."

W. R. H.

GUATEMALA CITY,  
*October, 1905.*



## CHAPTER I

### THE AZORES

I to the famed Hesperian plains,  
Whose rich trees bloom with gold,  
To join the glad-attuned strains  
My wingèd progress hold.

—Pindar.

ON the fifteenth day of November, 1901, at two P.M., I was pacing the deck of the *Tartar Prince*, nine days out from New York, when her skipper, Captain McFarlane, pointed to what seemed to me a huge bank of snow, stationary and retaining its towering outlines among the ever shifting clouds. "That," said he, "is Pico, 7,500 feet above the sea and the highest peak of the Azores." A shout from the steerage deck hailed the solitary island and reminded us that other eyes than ours had seen the snow-crowned mount. We were now sailing through and winding around the famed volcanic islands of the Azores, claiming a population of 260,000 and the honour of being the solitary survivors of the lost continent of Atlantis. San Miguel, Santa Maria, Pico, Terceira, Fayal, San Jorge, Graciosa, Flores and Corvo, with two groups of rocks known as Formigas and Dollabaret form the Azorean archipelago, eight hundred miles off the coast of Portugal.

Notwithstanding the dread the ancient mariners felt for the great Western Ocean their poets found

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

it full of charm and mystery. Their imagination revelled in golden sunsets and in marvellous legends associated with the "Blessed isles of the sea," where the souls of heroes dwelt in luxurious ease, and rapturous pleasures. Homer tells us in the fourth book of his *Odyssey*,

"No snow  
Is there, nor yet great storm, nor any rain,  
But always ocean sendeth forth the breeze  
Of the shrill West, and bloweth cool on men."

His contemporary Hesiod envies the souls of the great dead who dwelt

"In those blest isles where Saturn holds his reign,  
Apart from Heaven's immortal calm they share  
A rest unsullied from the clouds of care:  
And yearly thrice with sweet luxuriance crown'd  
Springs the ripe harvest from the teeming ground."

The poet Pindar in his dream of ecstasy says that,

"O'er these Isles of the Blest the ocean breezes blow, and flowers gleam with gold, some from the land on glistening trees, while others the water feeds; and with bracelets of these they entwine their hands and make crowns for their heads."

Here also according to mythological history was celebrated the marriage of Zeus and Hera. At the feast which followed the nuptials the invited gods acknowledged the honour conferred upon them by many gifts presented to the sovereign pair. Titoe the daughter of Pan caused a wonderful tree to spring from the earth. It bore golden apples of a delicious flavour and was given in trust to the Hesperides, the seven daughters of the world-

## THE AZORES

bearing Atlas. These virgins dwelt in Hesperus, the garden of the gods, now said to be the Azorean Flores. Like frail Eve they yielded to temptation, ate of the fruit and fell asleep. Then Ladon, the great serpent, was brought to Hesperus and commanded to watch the garden and protect the precious fruit. One of the labours imposed upon Hercules by the king of Mycenæ was to bring to the monarch one of the golden apples. Hercules penetrated the mystic isles, fought and slew Ladon, the serpent, and carried off three of the apples.

Such was the ancient legend of "these blest isles," before Sherif Mohammed al Edrisi, a Tetuanian by birth, discovered in the twelfth century the Azorean Islands. In 1444, the Portuguese navigator Cabral re-discovered the Azores and landed on an island which he named Santa Maria. The discovery of the other eight, which form the archipelago, naturally followed.

Like all oceanic islands far away from the mainland the Azores were uninhabited. In the southeastern Atlantic the Canary Islands were the only lands inhabited when discovered by the Spaniards and Portuguese. Here the Spaniards found the Guanches, a mysterious race of men and women, now extinct, who knew nothing of any other land. When asked by the Spanish chaplain of the ship how they came there, their only answer was, "God placed us on these islands and then forgot us and forsook us." They embalmed their dead, preserved the mummies in wooden coffins like the Egyptians,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

and their only domestic animal was the goat. Who they were, where they came from, and at what time their forebears settled on the islands they knew not.

And now a word touching the inhabitants of the Azores and we close this historical record. Of all the nations of Europe, perhaps the Portuguese spring from the most heterogeneous elements. In the remote past there was no intermarrying or indeed association between race and race. In the dark abysm of time the hand of every man of one race was against the hand of every man of all other races. Stranger meant enemy, alien meant foe. In the twelfth chapter of the Book of Judges, we read how the Gileadites slew forty-two thousand Ephraimites at the passages of the Jordan because they pronounced "shibboleth" "sibboleth." By their faulty speech they proved themselves to be of another people and they were slain. Rivers and mountains were then the barriers separating one race from the other. Then the race issue was at its strongest.

But a fallow race begets weedy men who in time will perish from off the earth. To break down this human law of isolation and interbreeding, a mysterious and irresistible force begins to move. Some strong race feels within it the lust of conquest. Its rulers find or make an excuse for war, enter their neighbours' territory, conquer the weak nation and settle down and intermarry with the daughters of the conquered. In time a new and stronger race is begotten, retaining perhaps its old name and may be

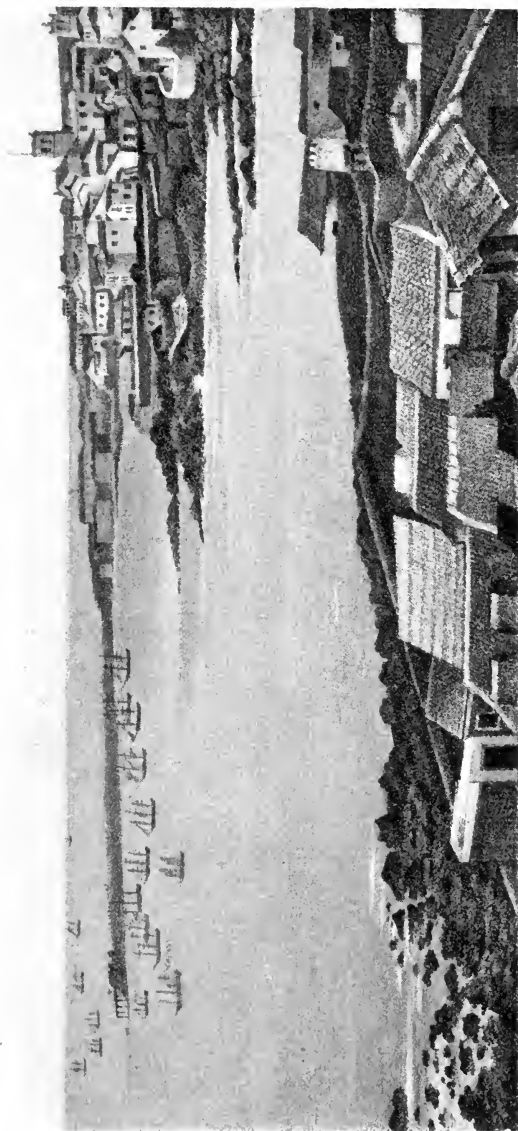
## THE AZORES

its old language, fattened with words from the language of the victors. Thus the Portuguese language is enriched with two hundred Moorish words. So into the great national caldron of Portugal was poured the blood of Iberians, Phœnicians, Celts, Lusitanians, Greeks, Romans, Goths, and Moors, who in succession overran the land and married with the daughters of the country. In more recent times came in Burgundians, Hebrews, African slaves and Flemings. From this commingling of blood and fusion of foreign races was begotten the Portuguese, a strong, vigorous and prolific people.

Early in the fifteenth century the Portuguese began the settlement of the Azores. They have been long enough on these islands to form an almost distinct race known as the Azorean, civilly and legally united to the old land and retaining the language, religion and many of the customs of their ancestors. A few years ago a river of emigration began to flow from the Azores to the New England States, and to stay the prospective depopulation of the islands the home government imposed on the emigrant a head tax of fifty dollars, an almost prohibitive impost for an Azorean. There are quite a number of Massachusetts ships engaged in the contraband trade of smuggling young men and women from the islands. The owners and captains take large risks, for when captured their vessels are confiscated and the captains heavily fined and often imprisoned.







CITY OF PONTA DELGADA



## CHAPTER II

### "ISLE OF BEAUTY"

"Where the clouds love to rest  
On the mountain's full breast,  
As they wander afar o'er the isles of the sea."

BEYOND all the islands of the Azores I had been curious to see San Miguel. Here were the great lava quarries and breakwater of huge bulk and length, partly swept away in 1896 by a tremendous tidal wave. Here also were the famous pine-apple gardens, the Tangerine orange groves, the seven cities of the Cid, buried in the crater lakes of Sette Cidades and the famed valley of the Furnas. Sometime during the night we anchored in the roadstead. When, early in the morning, I came on deck I saw with pleasure and admiration the city of Ponta Delgada. Perched on a commanding elevation was the crimson-painted church of St. Joseph. To our left was the historic old fort, hoary with age, bastioned, moated and painfully helpless in its senility. Occupying almost an entire square towered the Matriz, the finest church of the Azores, the splendid hospital buildings and the military barracks.

When I entered the city with its population of seventeen or eighteen thousand people I was at once struck with its quaint composite architecture, its

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

air of prosperity and scrupulous cleanliness. The private homes—and many of them are palatial—the stores, the public and civic buildings are of eruptive stone coated in cement stained or dyed in variegated colours. In the city, and indeed on the whole island, there are but four or five English-speaking residents. To one of these, the Hon. George Pickril, the American consul, I bore a letter of introduction. With gracious cordiality he bade me welcome, posted me at the club and secured for me excellent quarters at the “Azor,” the only hotel in the city. Accompanied by senhor Moreira I drove, a few days after landing on the island, to Morro dos Capellas, a bold and rugged headland towering sixteen hundred feet above the sea, to whose waters the cleavage is as straight and clean as that of the granite front of Cape Trinity, on the Saguenay. At the base of this rocky promontory is a cove formed by centuries of wave erosion, where the government has established a whaling-station from which thirty thousand gallons of whale oil were last year exported. Night and day from the plane of the headland a “look-out” with a marine glass sweeps the sea to the north, ready at a moment to telephone to the men of the cove the appearance and position of the ocean monsters. Our road from Ponta Delgada to Capellas was as symmetrically crooked as a stake and rider fence of the pioneer days of Ontario. It led through a wondrous panorama, passing rocks festooned with ivy, ravines carpeted with ferns and lava boulders robed in lichens. The wayside is redolent of rhodo-

## ISLE OF BEAUTY

dendrons and breathes of perfume. The very air is a delight, and pulsates with life, helping to sustain and enrich floral vegetation. You feel its invigorating effects and tonic influence as you move towards the undulating uplands shadowed by noble peaks. The road winds up embowered slopes, past welling springs, back and forth in zigzags, over quaintly-constructed bridges, across the steep faces of the foothills, along narrow crests caressed by perfumed breezes, till you feel that you are fed, filled and intoxicated with the sweet air of mountain land. Every foot of arable land is under cultivation. Lava fences three feet high mark the highway on each side and divide the lots. Rivulets of water course along in stone channels by the side of the roadway, and the noise of running water, so dear to the Azorean heart, is continuous.

At the town of Lomba da Cruz the route winds to the right through gulches and mountain ravines richly clothed with chestnuts, cork oaks and alders. On every side are water threads, jets and cascades made possible by the strange formation of the erratic lava and volcanic settling. Camoëns, the Portuguese Virgil, took his descriptions of the "enchanted Island of Venus" from this immediate neighbourhood. The "*sonorosa lympa fugitiva*" and the springs and runnels leaping down the hill-sides so beautifully woven into his "Luciad" are as brightly beautiful and inviting to-day as they were to the great poet two centuries ago.

The view from the summit of the Morro,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

which we ascended in the afternoon, is entrancing. On every side are the deep, breathing waters of the ocean, whose ululations at night are strangely weird. To the south are the bold and pine-covered peaks of Balho sloping down to fertile valleys, where villages nestle, where cross-crowned spires pierce the drifting clouds, and where fields, green with waving rye and clover, stretch away to the sea and complete a ravishing panorama. As we descended the Morro our route carried us by torrent-swept defiles of rugged ranges, where centuries of rain and erosion have opened and deepened ravines into fearsome canyons. Marvellously beautiful and fair to look upon is the richness of floral apparel in which these hills are attired.

No florist in Canada could offer you, for love or money, a bouquet like unto that which you may gather and fashion here in ten minutes: heliotropes and scented verbenas, blue and scarlet salvias, dahlias and fuchsias of the more primitive kind, chrysanthemums, and great vines of the yellow-flowered madre silva, gay and bright from sheer force of unchecked luxuriance. In the valley of Capellas the wind is beautiful. In the trees it is as the noise of the sea, but muffled. Every leaf that trembles adds a delicate tone to the murmur which at times is like unto the singing of bees when the hive swarms. It has the sense of touch. It is in love with the leaves and caresses the minutest blades of grass.

In this moist air, and at this time of the year

## ISLE OF BEAUTY

the trees have all the tints of yellow as if the leaves were expiring the gold absorbed in summer. There is no falling of the leaf, as we understand the word. Leaf after leaf detaches itself from the stem, and, proud of its golden colour, quits the parental home, and elopes with the first fair breeze that woos it. The sky, when the sun is declining, has the tint of bronze—dark orange and dark blue—and the transparent light of alabaster. At night a bird whistles notes which fall like drops of an opiate on soft marble. Truly the valley of Capellas is an idyllic vale, where nature has accumulated a profusion of riches; a Biblical Eden, where we breathe an air impregnated with an odour of luxuriant vegetation.

On our return to Ponta Delgada we lunched at Ramaltra. The only tannery on the island of San Miguel is in operation in this town, a miserable burg full of half-wild pariah dogs and smells that could be photographed. The tameness of all domestic animals on this island, of cattle, sheep, dogs, pigs and poultry, resulting from habitual kind treatment, is striking to a foreigner. We noticed this in particular in Ramaltra, where a cow walked deliberately up to one of our party, licked his hand and rested her head on his shoulder. On entering the *cerejaria*, or village inn, the mistress of the house approached deferentially, and courtesying, said: "*Louvada seja Nosso Senhor Jesus Christus*,"—praised be Jesus Christ our Lord. "*Epara sempre seja louvada*"—may He be praised forever and ever—spoke back Augusto Periera, one of our party.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

This is a common salutation, and reminds one of the Irish peasant's, "God save all here," and the answer, "God save you kindly, sir." Our luncheon was really a dinner, consisting of *sopa secca*, "dry soup," made of wheaten bread, beef, cabbage, and mint, followed by *bacalhau*—dried codfish, boiled and soaked previously for eighteen hours in running water. This is a national dish among the Azoreans. Bread of rye, butter and cheese were served with Minno wine of fine fruitness and possessing a stringency and sharpness enough to take one's breath away. Then followed coffee and cigarettes. We settled our account, shook hands with the kindly people of the house, and reached home about ten o'clock. So clear was the atmosphere and bright the heavens that from the balcony of our hotel we looked out upon the ocean, and could clearly discern the island of Santa Maria floating like a misty mass fifty miles away on the Atlantic.

## CHAPTER III

### FURNAS AND THE GARDEN OF THE GODS

On this morn  
When the exulting elements in scorn  
Satiated with destroyed destruction lay  
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,  
As panthers sleep.

—*Shelley.*

“SEE Furnas, and if you are going to pass the winter in the Azores, Horta is the place for you,” said senhor D’Ullua to me one morning in the breakfast room of the “Azor.” Horta is the seaport city of Fayal and is grinding its teeth with jealous rage in face of the growing prosperity of Ponta Delgada. The senhor was from Fayal and was loyal to his island. He had passed a rather uncomfortable year in Boston and was successfully trying to forget his English, which he spoke in fragments. He was also making commendable but futile efforts to erase from his memory all recollection of the climate of New England which he blasphemously declared was “*Nove mezes de inverno e tres de inferno*”—nine months of frost and ice and three of hell. I made no attempt to contradict him for I was then an exile from my own land, driven to the South by a northern specialist.

So the next morning in the company of a Lisbon gentleman and his wife I started for Furnas. The

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

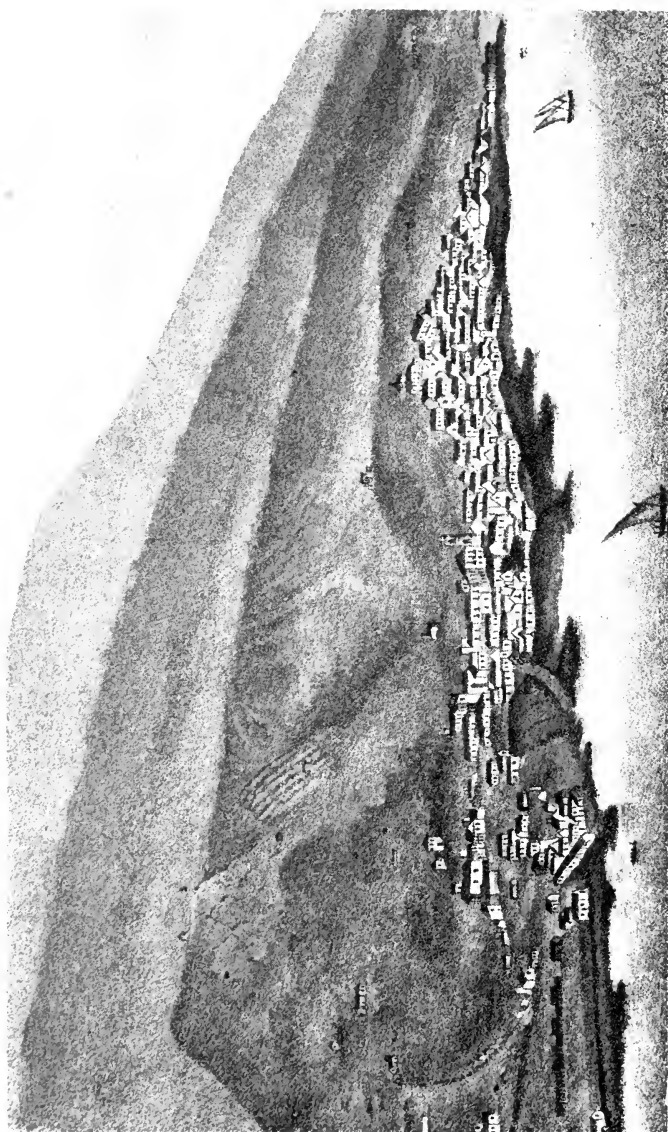
road was equal to the best I had seen in Europe, the only fault in it being the dangerous curves around the dizzy sides of the mountains. Everywhere there were signs of age and long occupation. The paths leading over the rocky heights had been worn by the feet of men and animals for hundreds of years.

Following the road we reached a point where it abruptly descends, known as Pedros do Galligo, and a thousand feet below lay the Cintra Michaleuse, the Azorean Vale of Tempe—the boast and pride of all the island, the valley of the Furnas. Right across on the opposite side of the crater, we saw the ever-rising smoke of the boiling geysers, whose sulphurous and noxious fumes kill all vegetation in their immediate neighbourhood. Here in 1522 occurred one of the most stupendous volcanic eruptions of modern times. The ashes vomited enveloped the whole island in murky darkness, and covered the land from five to seventeen inches deep with ashes, powdered pumice, and arenaceous trap. The year of the upheaval is, to this day, called “*O anno dos Cines*,” or the ash year.

The eruptions were preceded by earthquakes, when the sea swallowed old islands and gave birth to new ones, some of which remain to this day. Mountains were hurled into valleys, and valleys rose to mountains. A submarine crater burst forth and formed an island ten miles in circumference, which disappeared, in one night, as mysteriously as it came. A thick mantle of ashes, sand and lava from







CITY OF VILLA FRANCA, BUILT ON THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT TOWN

## THE GARDEN OF THE GODS

submarine and subaërial eruptions darkened the heavens. At Villa Franca a mountain fell upon the town, burying for all time five thousand people. In sixty seconds a tidal wave rolled over the huge grave. When the sea receded and the living began a search for the dead amid the ruins, the excavators came upon the skeleton of a mounted horseman, booted and spurred, with lance poised, mired and engulfed as he was fleeing from the doomed city.

Upon the ashes of the buried city a second Villa Franca arose, which has now a population of from four to five thousand souls. A lake three miles in circumference disappeared, leaving at the level of its waters a rich deposit of pozzolana—a bright red, granulated earth. But Furnas was the very focus and theatre of igneous activity on the island.

To-day the awful evidences of its devastating ruin are seen everywhere. Truncated cones rise all around you, whose scarped and deeply furrowed sides, with their immense concavities, tell of the frightful agonies and convulsions of the mother which bore them. The erosion and rain of centuries have deepened the lava furrows of the mountain-sides and a luxuriant growth of giant ferns and tropical cryptomeria is bearding them with hoary and venerable age. Eight miles south-west of Furnas the highest mountain then in the island was lifted from its base, flung into a distant valley, and a crater four miles in circumference was created. The lips of this gigantic basin rise eighteen hundred feet

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

above its bed. Here repose in windless peace Lagoa Grande, whose waters are a bright emerald, and Azul Lake, rivalling its companion in cerulean blue.

The day preceding the eruption was of exceptional calmness, the air was heavy and oppressive, a drowsy stillness brooded over the land. Pasturing cattle herded side by side, sheep bunched closer, and the dog of the shepherd crouched at his master's feet and looked up enquiringly into his face. The stillness continued to deepen, till a sense of loneliness entered into the habitations of man, followed by melancholy and foreboding. No stars were in the cloudless sky that night, the moon swung blood red over the distant hills. At two in the morning the mountain trembled, swayed like a ship on a billowy ocean, when, with a roar heard far out to sea, its crest rose high in the air, and fell into a neighbouring lake, known to this day as Lagoa Secca, or Dry Lake.

Straight up into the heavens, above the loftiest peak of the highest mountain, rose a huge column of fire, and out from the womb of the monster came pillars of smoke and flame. Fearful detonations, produced by escaping gas and bursting lava bombs, followed in rapid succession. Lurid flames and weird lights appeared in the heavens, and a fierce heat scorched all vegetation for miles around. Rocks of blackest lava, many tons in weight, were shot high in the air, and falling crushed into fragments the shepherds' cabins. The darkness beyond the focus of disturbance, the rumbling of noises

## THE GARDEN OF THE GODS

like unto a thousand wagons on a rough road, the mysterious sounds under the earth's surface, the poisonous exhalations of decomposing sulphates, of escaping carbonic acids and chlorides, alternating with dense showers of cinders, ashes and stones, portended the dissolution of the world and the dawning of eternity.

Man was beside himself with terror; to him the spiral flame was the flash of the uplifted sword, and the column of light, the gleam of the arm of the avenging angel. It was as if the universe was dissolving and the divine Dramaturgist had chosen these fire-capped mountains and blazing peaks for the stage on which to produce the initial act of the sublime and awful drama. People died of fright; some, to use the words of Holy Writ, "withered away from fear;" others lost their reason, and ever after were raving maniacs or sullen idiots.

The flowing lava caught the fleeing sheep and cattle as they rushed for shelter, swept them into a grove of pine-trees, and engulfed them for all time. Under seventeen feet of scorix, basalt, and ashes they lie buried, and no eye may look upon the ruins of the holocaust. At the same time in a south-east part of the island another mountain was destroyed, and a vast crater formed, on whose bosom floats Lagoa Foco, or the Lake of Fire, around whose shores the beautiful cahellinho fern attains giant proportions, and immense beds of remarkable moss, holding water like a sponge, abound.

Ashes fell in Portugal, eight hundred miles away,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

while thick layers of cinders mixed with pumice floated two hundred miles out to sea and compelled inward-bound vessels to change their course. For three days and nights no sun, moon, or stars shone in the gloomy firmament, and the whole island was shrouded in darkness.

That Furnas was the focus and theatre of igneous activity is proved by the truncated cones of all sizes, the scarped and deeply furrowed sides of which, with their immense concavities, tell of the tyrant power which gave them birth. Since this appalling catastrophe the lava furrows have been deepened by rain and erosion, and are now stupendous ravines, like unto the canyons of Arizona, whose sides are robed with masses of hanging trees and giant cryptomeria. To-day the valley of Furnas is a dream of joy, whose princely gardens, like that of senhor do Conto, invite comparison with those of the world. The village of seven hundred souls nestles in its arms, surrounded by orange groves, fig trees and fruitful vineyards, calm and peaceful as the sea when the storm dies away. All that remain to remind the present generation that this fair vale was once the theatre of as grand and spectacular a drama as was ever given to the eye of man to look upon are the geysers and burning springs which day and night throw up columns of steam, hot water, and blue-gray mud. Here, heated by fires invisible, from depths unknown, five boiling caldrons burst from the earth, rise high in the air, are dissipated in steam or form rivulets of hot and boiling waters, which

## THE GARDEN OF THE GODS

converging into a small river, flow peacefully through the village.

Here, also, from the Boca de Inferno—the mouth of hell—with the pause and regularity of a trip hammer, is vomited the gray-blue mud collected by the peasantry for its supposed curative qualities, when applied to diseases of the scalp. The mouth of this dismal abyss is frightful to look into, and the depth of the dark and terrible chasm no plummet has ever sounded. If one could look down upon the awful furnace beneath, and view the lake of fire, what a memory would be his for all time.

The Portuguese government, with commendable enterprise, has built in Furnas a very creditable bathing establishment, open and free to the public, where invalids from all the Azorean Islands hopefully congregate. The waters are piped to the banaria, where the patient, on the advice of the doctor, selects a warm, thermal, or cold bath. They are officially classified as sulphurous, chalybeate or ferruginous, saline, acidulous, or carbonate waters, and are said to be specifics for rheumatism and skin diseases.





## CHAPTER IV

### IN THE AZORES

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes  
And fondly broods with miser care;  
Time but the impression deeper makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.

—Burns.

AFTER my visit to Furnas I understood why Edmund Waller chose the Azores for the theme of his "Battle of the Summer Islands." The air is balmy and invigorating, the climate semi-tropical and the soil rich in chlorides and nitrates. On the outer edges of Ponta Delgada and here and there in the island of San Miguel are the gardens and summer homes of the titled and wealthy Portuguese who come here with their families—and the germ of race suicide has not yet entered the blood of the Portuguese—to be alone and revel in atmospheric and climatic joy.

When visiting Furnas I was honoured with an invitation from the Marquis de Fonte Bella to pass a day at his *villeggiatura*, or country residence. I say honoured without reservation, for the Portuguese and Spaniards of the nobility are the most exclusive and to strangers the most reserved class of all Europe. They are the *oi elyektoi*, and when you enter their social circle you come into a highly rarified atmosphere. But once admitted to the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

charmed circle you are at home. The home air is impregnated with hospitality, with easy courtesy and a gracious freedom of action intimating in every movement a generous welcome and an assurance that the house is yours.

The road through the estate from the highway to the residence was lined with cork trees, pollard oaks and chestnuts, whose branches met and intertwined, forming a shaded avenue of refreshing coolness. Breaking the line of continuity were box-edged paths leading to beds filled with flowering plants of the older fashion, asters, balsams, heliotropes and scented verbenas. Here also were beds of geraniums, blue and scarlet salvias, fuchsias of the more primitive kind, and yerba-santa, whose delicate blossoms stood star-white against the foliage. An electric button at the gate lodge notified the palace inmates of the approach of visitors, and when I stepped down from the carriage I was met by His Excellency who welcomed me with the true, courteous cordiality of the Portuguese gentleman.

After luncheon, the marquis retired to his siesta hammock, commending me to the attention of his son and daughter. The young count was educated at Ushaw, England, spoke English and French fluently and had travelled in North and South America. With him I rambled through the family demesne and forest. Our conversation drifted into the origin of languages and their structural differences. "When I was travelling in North America," said the count, "I visited a set-

## IN THE AZORES

tlement of Free-Lovers in Western New York and since then I never think of the spelling and pronunciation of your awful language without also thinking of the Free-Lovers' community." "Where does the affinity or likeness enter?" I asked. "In that there is no marriage between them, there is no law or rule governing your spelling and pronunciation, no legal bond holding them together and as a result your language is anarchical and confusing. Then take your colloquial phrases, particularly in America, how is it possible for any educated foreigner to understand them? To give you an example. The evening after the presentation of my letters to a gentleman in Chicago I was taking a bath, when a bell boy knocked on the door, pushed an envelope under it and shouted loud enough to be heard in every room on the corridor, 'A letter for you, sir.' Well, I hastily threw on my bath robe, thinking the matter was of immediate importance, opened the envelope and read, 'My Dear Count, If you have nothing on to-night will you dine with me and a few friends—say nine o'clock. Don't dress but come just as you are.'"

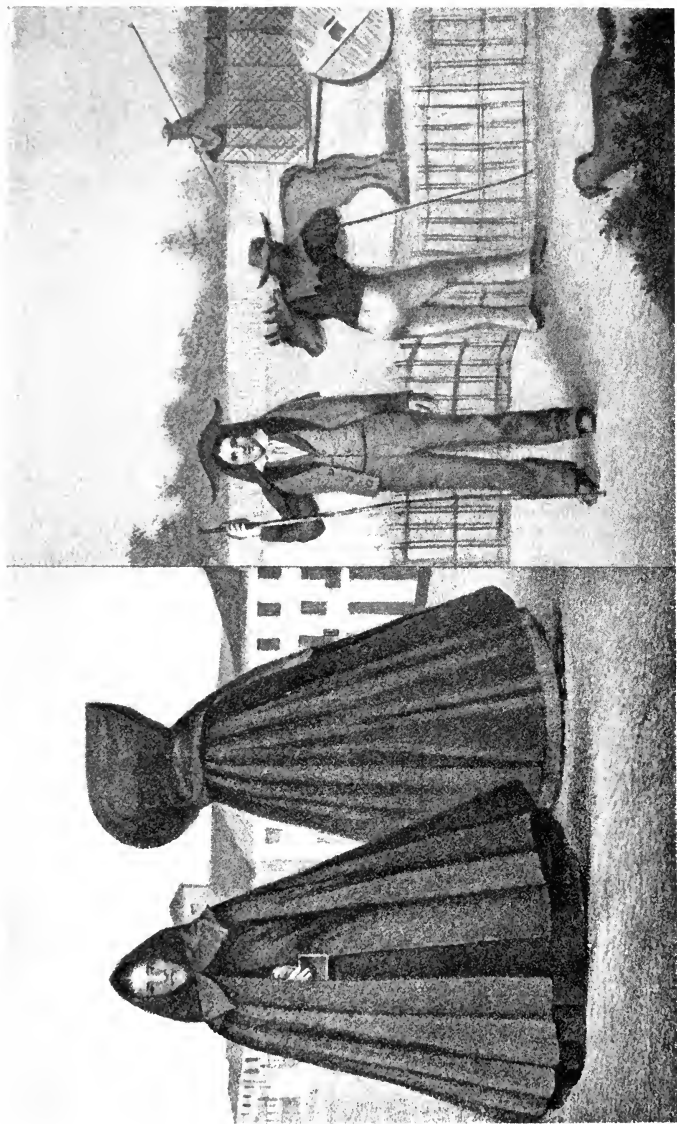
Many years ago the father of the present Marquis do Conto laid out the splendid grounds of the estate. He was a great traveller and enriched his princely property with exotics from Asia, South America and Africa. Here were conifers from the highlands of Brazil and slopes of the Himalayas, and orchids from the forests of Guiana. The count pointed out to me loquat trees from China, large and shady

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

as fig trees, with aromatic blossoms, gum trees and eucalypti or Australian fever trees whose slender polished branches bore long drooping leaves with a mellow splendour of russet, red and yellow. We strayed into a side path and at once I was conscious of a heavy, vaporous odour. "These are the manchineel trees," said the count, "and if you fall asleep under them you'll never wake." Here also were bella-sombras, huge forest trees from Brazil and flowering magnolias from Central America, forest giants throwing out a white scented flower; camelias from Japan, as large as apple trees; and oleanders or South Sea rose trees, beautiful and odorous. Scattered among the imperial beauties were pomegranates, tall papaws and golden fruited species of the citrus, from the gigantic shaddock to the diminutive lime.

In the very frenzy and wantonness of unchecked luxuriance grew orange trees, spice trees, okra and wild aloes. I stretched out my hand to a fruit of fairest appearance. "Don't touch it," spoke the count, "it's *nux vomica*." One must be careful here, I thought, not only of his language but even of his eating. We crossed a rustic bridge spanning a *rio*, or small river, fed from a mountain stream that fell and tumbled in cascades over volcanic boulders which bore no traces on their surface of glacial action. We returned to the house by a tufa road whose edges were rich in rose geraniums, white jessamines, chrysanthemums and great bushes of the yellow-flowered madre silva and the saffron





DRESS WORN IN THE AZORES SHOWING CAPOTES AND CARAPUCAS

## IN THE AZORES

tinted sedume, gay and bright and charming from sheer force of health and freshness.

The public squares, parks and gardens of Ponta Delgada invite inspection and comparison with those of any city of its size in Europe or America. But to see the living city in miniature one ought to take a seat in the public park or Largo do João Franco, and witness the viascope of the ever-changing procession. Before you, pass in review peasants of the farm lands, richly uniformed officers of the local regiments, students in their academic robes, fashionably dressed ladies with their escorts or duennas, priests in soutane and barettas, uniformed policemen, sailors from Japan and the islands of the sea, soldiers and subalterns in parade dress or mufti; women of the middle class, cloaked, or shrouded in a hideous garment called *capote à capella*. Here also pass of an afternoon young ladies chaperoned by their mothers, beggars whose right hands are stiffened into the horizontal from habitual extension, working girls in picturesque costumes, nursery girls pushing go-carts, and now and then a venerable or sturdy peasant wearing the old time hat with the falling or Havelock neck-shade, or *carapuça*, as it is called here.

Everything in these Azores that walks on four legs, save rats and cats, is harnessed to a cart and made to earn its food. To a stranger from over the sea it is very amusing to pass a sheep drawing a diminutive wagon and a big husky fellow seated and holding the reins, or a goat pulling a ten-gallon

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

keg of wine followed by a dog trotting along with a load of salt. Of course there are fairly good horses and mules here, but they are in the liveries or owned by the wealthier class. But the donkey owns the town. His importance entitles him to a capital D, though his villainous looks should condemn him to penal servitude for life. You meet him everywhere: in the lanes, at the church doors, in the public squares, on the streets; he is all over and his awful hee-haw, hee-haws, when first heard startle you as would the war-whoop of a Seneca.

For three hundred years there has been no noticeable immigration to these islands and the population is now pure Azorean, for the sixty years of Spanish occupation was altogether military and did not affect the unity of the race. Four hundred years in the life of an island people is a period sufficiently long to develop racial traits, a racial character and entity. To judge from appearances an infusion of new blood would do no harm, for an insular race when left too long alone must, by an inexorable law of nature, deteriorate. Yet there are many fine-looking men and women here. Fifth Avenue can turn out no better dressed nor cleaner groomed men than those one meets in the streets of Delgada on a Sunday afternoon. The silk hat, kid gloves and cane or silk umbrella are *de rigueur*, and without which no gentleman will appear in public. The Azorean, like the Spaniard, is never full-dressed unless he is well shaved, and unlike the celebrated De Cossè,



## IN THE AZORES

Duke of Brissac, he never shaves himself. Timoleon de Cossè, the impecunious Duke of Brissac, could not afford the luxury of a private barber and disdained to mingle with the common herd in a tonsorial shop. He compromised with his dignity when sharpening his razor by the necessity of doing something. "God has made thee a gentleman, O de Cossè, and the king has made thee a duke. It is, therefore, right and fit," he would repeat, "that thou shouldst have something to do; therefore, thou shalt shave thyself."

When reading the other day the "History of the Norman Conquest," I ran across an interesting sentence which, in the light of recent happenings, may be questioned. Freeman states that "the blue-eyed races, the daring sons of Japheth, and liberty loving races of Europe are destined to subdue the world." If this prediction be verified the men of these islands will carry no banner nor wave a torch in the triumphal procession, for their eyes are as dark as the prospects of a ruined gambler. When I sailed away from the Azores I carried with me and still retain agreeable memories of a courteous and kindly people, of an educated class of singular affability and courtesy, and of a race working out its temporal and eternal salvation in honesty, industry, and frugality.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

"Look out, look out my trusty crew,  
Strain every anxious eye;  
Though spray and mist obscure the view  
We know that land is nigh."

THE moon was yet in the heavens when our ship the *Dahomè* floated into the silent and mysterious island where sea and sky are always bathed in the same strangely tender, weird and purplish haze. We knew that Montserrat, the scourged, grimly submissive, and resigned, was at hand. Straining our eyes we thought we saw the scarped and torn breast of La Soufrière but it was an apparition of clouds. Later the mists floated off and Plymouth, La Soufrière and the sharp conical hills of the solitary island were uncovered. Rising abruptly in wooded summits from a sea of glassy smoothness, Montserrat was resting on the azure waters, under a sky of cerulean loveliness. A panorama of bluffs and narrow precipitous valleys sloping to the sea was uncovered. The cane-fields filled the lowlands, moved up to the sides of the rising ground and covered the hills. We saw a few plantations, the ruins of sugar-mills of other and more prosperous days, and the picturesque little town of Plymouth slowly recovering from cloudburst and hurricane.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

The second bell for breakfast called us from the deck and during the half hour the talk was of the Lesser Antilles. Stretching in a graceful curve across the Caribbean Sea from Porto Rico to the north coast of South America is the chain of small islands called the Lesser Antilles. They fill a conspicuous place in modern history, for here England, Spain, Holland and France contended, with varying success, for possession. The earth on these islands is saturated with blood, and if crime and brutality could blast a land with sterility, they ought now to be barren rocks. I speak of the past when pirates, buccaneers and cut-throats of the sea infested these islands, when the sons and daughters of Africa were chattels, but chattels owning wills with which they protested, but in vain, against the cruelty and brutality of the white man. They reek blood, the blood of lashed slaves and of black flesh that dripped blood from the jaws of hounds. Are the islands accursed? Notwithstanding the richness of soil, the beauties of nature, the hospitality of the whites and the accessibility to markets, the islands are impoverished and the whites decreasing. Everywhere are the ruins of well constructed buildings, and of once prosperous plantations where creole hospitality sat enthroned. The heart and good desire of gracious kindness and cordial welcome are still with the sons and grandsons, but the wealth which made the islands famous is no more. The stranger is to-day received with open arms, but the outward semblances and inward graces but conceal the approaching doom.

## THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

Alas, for Montserrat, once so rich and fair to look upon! This pearl on the necklace of the Antilles has lost its lustre. A few years ago Montserrat was beautiful and prosperous, but one day a tremendous storm, here called a hurricane, raced for an afternoon at the speed of ninety miles an hour across the face of this fair isle. It mowed down every tree of the Montserrat Lime Company, uprooted the cane-fields, and unroofed the buildings of Plymouth. An earthquake, followed by a cloudburst, completed the desolation, and Montserrat was a ruin.

The island is now slowly recovering from its misfortune; the lime trees and sugar-canes are replanted, the houses rebuilt, the coffee, cacao and arrowroot plants flourish, and Montserrat is slowly regaining its former prosperity.

It is the most interesting island in this most attractive archipelago. Over the torn caves of old volcanoes the soaking rains and fervid sun of the tropics have woven on the rich soil a carpet of bloom and verdure, which covers the ghastly disfigurement with surpassing beauty. There is no continuous ridge binding the mountains together. Between the volcanic mounts lie deep gorges or broad stretches of garden lands, which dip towards the sea. Back and forth through all runs the broken and twisted geological system. Here are strata deposited in the miocene tertiary, and metamorphic rocks breaking out along the island face. The complex and composite results of diverse influences and forces are metamorphosed into weird and varied forms.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

The craters are now cold and shapeless, and with one exception dead. The morning after my arrival I visited this brimstone crater. Within it the lava boils and bubbles, and sulphurous vapours rise. An oppressive exhalation of sulphurated hydrogen serves to increase the gloomy terror of the place, and a pyramid of lava, robed from base to crest in wild vegetation, rises a thousand feet above the dismal old Soufrière, from which steam and the fumes of sulphur are rising night and day. There is a horrible majesty in its isolation. It is a dangerous neighbour, and may some day be the ruin of Plymouth and the neighbouring plantations.

Ninety-nine per cent. of the population of Montserrat are negroes. They are a happy and jovial people, bubbling over with laughter and good nature. On Sunday I had a favourable opportunity for studying them at their best. The women were smartly gowned, and, according to their standard of fitness, no doubt, dressed in good taste. They lean to a profusion of white muslin, ribbons and feathers, while the young men delight in rakish hats, check trousers and jaunty coats. I saw no signs of poverty; the negroes seemed well-fed and outwardly clean. They heard mass with great reverence, and listened to the explanation of the Gospel with attention and interest. I was informed that each family owned its own hut, grazing for a cow, and a garden for the cultivation of yams, plantains, and cassava.

On this island there is practically no twilight, the descending sun

## THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

"Dyes the bright wave with bloody light,  
Then sinks at once and all is night."

Before coming to Montserrat, every one to whom I spoke of my intended visit warned me against land crabs, cane toads and *cicadæ*. I was told to be careful and not to walk across my bedroom floor in my bare feet, for scorpions and lizards, in spite of all precaution, stole into the houses. I was not to leave my stockings on the floor, but to hang them on the back of a chair, lest centipedes and jiggers should crawl into them. The advice was well meant, and applies equally to all the Southern Carib Islands. But midges, gnats, mosquitoes and black flies are the terror of the amateur hunter and angler in our own forests, and I defy the West Indies, including Demerara, to produce any winged monster surpassing in the ferocity of its attack our own gallinipper of Muskoka. Montserrat is undeservedly notorious for mosquitoes. I was told they were bloodthirsty and ferocious villains—winged pirates—but for the two charming weeks I was the guest of my large-hearted friend, Father Fogarty, I suffered no annoyance from insects of any kind.

Twenty-five years ago Father Fogarty left the pleasant glens and green fields of Ireland to devote himself to the Carib mission, and this accomplished priest, a man of ripe scholarship and generous impulses, has literally exiled himself from his native land in order to give his life to the spiritual uplifting of these dark descendants of darker slaves. To live here on this lonely island, separated from as-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

sociation with refined minds, to endure the everlasting sameness of continuous routine with no redeeming variety of occupation or cheering influence of friendly association with one's own race—to endure all this and to endure it cheerfully, waiting for the reward at the end, a man must be either a saint or cast in the heroic mould of a stoic.

Roaming aimlessly one morning through the streets of Plymouth and picking my way lest I might step on one of the babies or little children that swarmed and tumbled in the volcanic dust of the streets, I was brought to a sudden halt by a sign that confronted me from the side of a decent-looking stone cottage: "Hugh Kelly, boot and shoe-maker."

"Hello! *Quæ regio in terris non plena laboris*," I involuntarily exclaimed. Entering I asked of a negro cobbler, who was pounding a piece of obstinate sole leather on a smoothing iron, if I could see Mr. Kelly. "'Dessay," he answered, "I am Massa Kelly."

"Well, Mr. Kelly," I said, "I merely called in to see you, but may I ask how you came to be called Kelly?"

The shoe-maker informed me that after the manumission of the slaves his father took the name of his master, whose name was Kelly. I afterwards learned that it was a common practice among the liberated slaves to take their owners' names, and that fifteen or sixteen of the same name in a town did not necessarily imply any relationship.

And now let me finish this chapter with the



## THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

memory of a charming hour I passed alone one night on my host's verandah when the village slept and the household had retired.

In the solitary window of every negro cabin burned the "jumbo light" to remind the ghosts of the dead, and the spirits of the night that friends were sleeping there. The moon hung high over the shimmering waves of the Caribbean Sea, the wash of whose waters on the beach alone broke the stillness of the night. Innumerable stars, of a brilliancy surpassing those of our northern skies in mid-winter, studded the great dome and lent a surpassing beauty to the night. For the first time I understood why the East gave birth to astronomy, astrology and sabaism. As night deepened weird and fantastic flashes of lightning appeared in almost every part of the heavens. These waves of light came chiefly from the south-east, and north-east, and intermittently illumined the whole firmament. The lightning was never forked, and no thunder accompanied the display. At times stars broke away from their settings, resembling a train of fantastic lights. The atmosphere was luminously clear, so that objects afar off seemed near, even unto contact. The loveliness of the tropical day was rivalled by the matchless brilliancy of the starlit night. Amid the whisper of winds and the gleaming of stars I noticed the air was charged with the faint odour of sulphur which escaped from the gaping wound in the side of the mountain. From the crater of this solfatara rose the steam of boiling water which rested

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

over the royal crest, a cloud shifting and tremulous. Away to my left was the gorge thirty feet deep, dug by the torrents which came down from the mountain in the fateful hurricane of 1899, and between it and me reposed the sleeping village.

## CHAPTER VI

### GADELOUPE—MOTHER OF THE PINE-APPLE

Like silver in the sunshine, I beheld  
The imperial isle and when I saw her beauty  
My mind misgave me then.

—*Madoc*, I, 6.

NOWHERE on earth is there a fairer island than Guadeloupe and nowhere have I found a happier or more approachable people. Here the luscious and palatable pine-apple was first found, and here too the creole, the quadroon, and the octoroon attain the perfection of Southern beauty. Since the annihilation of St. Pierre, Basse-Terre, the island capital is admitted to be the most beautiful city of the West Indies. Behind the town is La Soufrière towering up to a romantic summit, where on a bright day one may see the volcanic smoke covering like a huge pall the imperial crest. To windward is the island of Marie Gallante, floating like a misty cloud thirty miles away. Between Guadeloupe and Dominica sleep the Saintes—isles of beauty.

“Where the children are fair as the roses they twine,  
And all but the spirit of man is divine.”

But it is of that terrible snake, the deadly *fer-de-lance*, that I would now write, and before commencing I ought to dip my pen in vitriol. I was surprised to learn from a gentleman to whom I bore a letter

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

of introduction, that the mountains of Guadeloupe, like those of Martinique and St. Lucia, were infested with this hideous reptile. The *fer-de-lance* is full of venomous cunning, and an ugly customer to meet anywhere, and at any time. When in St. Lucia, I was told he never strikes without provocation. "You must never approach him abruptly," said Mr. James Flett, of Castries, to me, "if so you are sure to pay for your rashness, because the instinct of self-protection dominates every animal, and the snake to defend himself makes the intruder feel the deadly effects of his fangs." "Never approach him abruptly?" Just so! but how is one to know even of his presence, when the ugly monster, when in repose, resembles a decayed branch in colour and deadness? Schomburgh, in his "Travels in Guiana," records how the *fer-de-lance*, coiled by the forest path, allowed fourteen persons to pass him, unnoticed by any one of the party, then, rising, he fastened his poisonous fangs in the neck of Schomburgh's young Indian wife, who fled to her husband's arms, where she died in great agony.

He is the deadliest snake in the West Indies, and perhaps in the world. There is no known antidote to his bite, and once in the grip of his venomous fangs, the victim abandons hope. He is not found alive in any zoological garden in the world. This rat-tailed monster when full grown is eight feet long, with a very ugly, flat, triangular head, a heavy jaw, and an eye that gives to it a look of malevolence, craft and cunning. He will

## GUADELOUPE

not get out of your way, and if you touch him or step on him you will never do it again.

A few months before I came here Ti-Joseph and Remy, sons of Roland Dufreneau, went into the woods early one morning to hunt *agouti*, a tailless, slender-limbed animal a little larger than our rabbit. Ti-Joseph, the elder of the two, stopped to fasten his leather gaiters or spats. When rising from his knee his brother Remy, who was crossing a fallen tree, gave a cry of alarm, staggered, then reeled as in a stupour, and fell. When Ti-Joseph rushed to his side a *fer-de-lance* was hanging from his brother's throat. Ti-Joseph killed the snake, then turned to help his brother, but he was already writhing in the agony of death. In 1871, in the parish of St. Francis, twenty-one men and boys were done to death by this hideous reptile.

The following year the mongoose was turned loose in the woods, and at once he began to make war on the *fer-de-lance*. Now, what is a mongoose? Well, the mongoose is a native of Ceylon, India, and parts of Africa, with the body and head of a weasel and the tail of a lizard. Where the snake can go, the mongoose can follow him. His manner of attack is peculiar. When the snake and the mongoose meet in the woods or in the open the *fer-de-lance* "strips" for the fight by forming a triple coil, with his vicious head swaying eight or ten inches above his body. Cunning as the reptile notoriously is, his cunning is no match for the strategy of the mongoose. When the snake is "set"

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the mongoose opens battle by moving around him in narrowing circles, the *fer-de-lance* watching him eye to eye. Slowly now, but outside the striking line, the mongoose trots around his foe, always keeping his ferretlike eyes on those of the snake. Then he breaks into a gallop, gradually increasing his stride, his pace becomes faster, and now he is rushing with the speed of a turbine. At last the pace begins to tell on the reptile. He has watched his enemy eye to eye all this time, and now his head is dizzy with the spinning. The muscles of the corrugated neck relax, the head sinks on his coiled body, the eyes close, when, as speeds the mauser, the mongoose is upon him, and all is over but the eating. The *fer-de-lance* has another enemy in the cribo snake. The cribo, though six to eight feet long, never harms man or child. He is always a welcome guest on the plantations, where he feeds on rats and mice, hunting around the "thrash"-roofed barns and outbuildings, scouting now and then through cellars and pantries. The superior speed of the *fer-de-lance* helps him out, but when the cribo corners him there is a dead *fer-de-lance*.

Another denizen of the island is the black scorpion, more feared by the bare-footed negro than the snake. Then there is the iguana, a lizard of giant wrack, an ugly and repulsive reptile, gnarled and knotted with warty excrescences, a disgusting and gruesome, but harmless creature, about three feet long, eaten by the blacks and pronounced by them to be excellent and nourishing food.

## GUADELOUPE

The chameleon of Guadeloupe is the most beautiful reptile on earth, and a marvel of transmutation of colour. When you meet him in the early morning this attractive little lizard is of olive tint, shot with bright and deep blue. When at noon you again see him he is of silver sheen, mottled with spots which change from deep olive into the most beautiful and brilliant tints. They were all on this volcanic island when Columbus landed, and as the island is one hundred and forty miles from the mainland, how did they get there? Are these islands of the Caribbean Sea all that remain of a submerged continent?

Nowhere in the West Indies, nor, indeed, in the world, is the creole seen to such advantage as in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Goethe's compliment, paid by the Princess Eleanor to Antonio, would be equally true if applied to the Guadeloupe creole. "All the gods have with one accord brought gifts to his cradle." Of finely chiselled features and lithe figures, the creoles of Guadeloupe, wherever you meet them, form a fascinating study.

The blending and mixing of hues and tints, the shadings, from the jet black of the Coromante negro down to the pale flesh of the Norman French, illustrate how the fusion of race with race was and is proceeding on this island; as this fusion progresses the distinguishing characteristics of the original races become less and less distinct, and a new type is evolved.

But to understand how this is brought about we

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

must go back to the origin of the creole in the West Indies. In the early days the unsettled state of these islands, haunts of sea rovers, pirates and buccaneers, the hardships of the long and stormy Atlantic voyage, the exaggerated reports of the awful heat and the absence of congenial society, deterred European women from approaching the Caribbean shores. The inevitable result followed. Enjoying entire immunity from all social restraint, fearing no rebuke from public opinion, and in most cases unrestrained by religious or moral law, the planters, agents and overseers entered into natural alliances with their female slaves and the daughters of the Arrawak Indians. From these unions were begotten the mulatto and the mustee. The terceron was the offspring of the white and the mustee, and the next in descent were the quadroon and octoroon.

To me all distinction of race disappeared in the octoroon, as I could perceive no visible difference in feature or colour between them and the whites. The mustees, mestizos, octoroons, and indeed many of the quadroons are sometimes fairer than the whites, but lack the endurance of the latter. "Well," I said to M. Julien Romain, who took the trouble to explain these variants to me the evening we sat on the balcony of the Hotel de France, "you have a phenomenal infusion of racial blood on this island." "Not so bad, after all," he good-naturedly answered.

Speaking of this wonderful blending of races, only in the French West Indies has the word creole a distinct and honourable meaning. In Louisiana,



## GUADELOUPE

if we except New Orleans, the creole no longer exists, and in the British West Indies every one born on the islands, negro, coloured, and white is conventionally called a creole, though even in these islands the word creole is very seldom mentioned.

*Criollo* is derived from the verb *criar*, which in Spanish and Portuguese means to breed, to create, to produce. In Portuguese especially a *criola* is understood to mean a person born in the West Indies.

When, in 1814, Bonaparte reëstablished slavery, after it was abolished by the directorate, he hedged in and protected the rights of the slave by his famous "*code noir*." By that code all children born to whites and mulattoes became legitimatized, and the status of the creole born of a Christian marriage was henceforth socially and civilly recognized. Many of these children were sent to France to be educated, and returned with all the refinement and polish of their white *confrères*; so that to-day those of mixed blood are socially the equals of the whites, assuming their means and education to be equal. Still, I am told, that among this mixed race there is an unconscious selection ever tending upwards in a favoured direction towards the superior race.

In the British West Indies a different order of life is established. Not only will no white girl marry a mulatto, but she draws the line even at an octoroon, and draws it tight, and no dowry will tempt a white planter or merchant to lead to the altar any girl with the slightest taint of negro blood

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

in her veins. This is one of the most sinister features of the British West India social life, and bars all hope for the elevation of the coloured race.

In the days of slavery, prior to 1837, the clergy of the Church of England, and those of the Lutheran Church, refused to baptize the children of slaves, holding that since Christ had made them free by His passion and death on the cross, no planter could bind them to slavery, and to hold them in bondage after baptism was a sin against the Incarnation.

On the other hand, the priests of the Catholic Church in the Spanish and French slave colonies insisted on the sacramental marriage of the slaves after their conversion to Christianity, and on the baptism of the children, refusing sacramental absolution to the master till he consented to obey the laws of his church on this point. Henceforth the slave became the ward of the church, and, while kneeling and praying at the same altar, the equal of his master. This recognition of his immortality secured better treatment for him on the plantation, and created a public opinion in his favour which a brutal master was compelled to respect.

Here and in Martinique every office, civil and political, except that of governor, is open to the creole. Side by side with his white brother he works in the professions, in commerce, in the civil service, in the editorial room, and in the departmental buildings. In the British islands of the Caribbean Sea there is, with rare exceptions, no hope for him, and above that of school-teacher to the blacks it is idle

## GUADELOUPE

for him to aspire. Legally and civilly he has all the rights and privileges of the white, but there is a wall of prejudice that he cannot climb over or break through.

When in Bermuda I enjoyed for a few days the companionship of a most amiable and scholarly clergyman of the Anglican Church, who was here to look into the administration of a school for the higher education of the negro. Forty years before our meeting his father was rector of Pembroke, Bermuda, and with funds collected in Great Britain established this school. "What good do you hope to achieve," I asked, "by carrying the black beyond a rudimentary training?"

"You surprise me," he answered. "Would you keep him in the illiteracy and ignorance of his slavery days; is he not worthy of as good an education as the white man?"

"Indeed he is," was my reply, "if you continue to deal with him as the whites deal with each other. But you do not; you close every avenue that leads to prosperity and success against him. With the exception of a coloured merchant in this city of Hamilton, who was trained in London, there is not on these islands a solitary negro holding any position in society, in civil or political life, in the executive or legislative council, or in any position that a white man would aspire to. In Bermuda there are ten blacks to one white, but you have raised the franchise so high that not one negro in eight has a vote. By higher education you lift him above his fellows,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

whom he despises. He cannot enter your society, and there he is, dissatisfied, discontented, and miserable, neither 'fish nor flesh, nor good red herring.' ”

## CHAPTER VII

### LA BREA—THE LAKE OF PITCH

A gulph profound as that Serbonian bog,  
Betwixt Damatia and Cassius old,  
Where armies whole have sunk.

—*Milton.*

TRINIDAD is the most southerly of the West Indian Islands and absolutely the hottest place I was ever in. It lies across the delta of the Orinoco River and is separated from South America by the Gulf of Paria. From the Caribbean Sea we entered the Dragon's Mouth and at daylight steamed into the harbour of Port of Spain, the capital of the island. The city claims a population of sixty thousand, and is saved from pestilence by torrential storms of rain and colonies of vultures, or Johnny-crows, which are protected by law, and dispute with mongrel curs the offal of the back-yards and streets. It was 94° where I sat on the balcony of the hotel, called, by way of mockery, I suppose, the Ice House. My object in coming to Trinidad was to see the famous Lake of Pitch and I joined a group of Venezuelan rebel officers who were leaving for the lake the morning after my arrival.

The lake is thirty-six miles from this city, near to San Fernando, a prosperous town of seven thousand souls. As our party arranged to go overland, we instructed our negro driver to wait for us on the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

mountain road, and we began the ascent of the volcanic hill on foot.

Our path carried us through a wilderness of tropical vegetation, a riotous outpouring of primeval nature. Tall cane-like manacque palms, forest nymphs, the russet and golden-hued melostromes, and the round-headed mango trees bowered the foot-hills. Higher up, the face of the mountain was robed in exquisite ferns, delicate creepers and vines clinging in festoons to trunks and branches of giant sequiæ, whose bark is an excellent tonic and febrifuge, and a good substitute for quinine. On our right and left stretched away to illimitable distances forests of mahogany, rosewood, *lignum vitæ*, satinwood, and logwood. Higher up is the pimento, which yields us the aromatic allspice, the *palma christi*, the parent of our castor oil, and the trumpet tree, from the wood of which the negro carves his flute.

The ascent of the mountain taxed our endurance severely. "An angle of forty-five degrees" is an expression commonly used in conversation to indicate any sort of an incline somewhat out of level. As a matter of fact a slope of ten or fifteen degrees is anything but easy. We carried a clinometer, and its markings recorded slopes of fifteen and forty-two degrees. At last we gained the mountain road from which the view was entrancing. Between us and the sea lay the alluvial plain or "intervals," as they say in New Brunswick, deposited by a spur of the Orinoco, and by other rivers which flow into the

## LA BREA—THE LAKE OF PITCH

Gulf of Paria. Fringing the shore mile upon mile stretched the cocoanut palms, and the mangrove swamps. Ships of many nations lay at anchor in the bay, taking in and discharging cargoes.

Trinidad is only twenty-six miles from Venezuela, and as the republic was painfully slow in meeting the interest on its European bonds, Europe, or a part of Europe, came in person to collect, accompanied by gunboats, battleships, and cruisers. Six of the warships were now riding at anchor in the bay, which was in constant agitation, caused by the steam launches, naphtha dories and *mouches-au-feu* carrying cablegrams, messages and dispatches to and from Port of Spain. To our left, between Paria and Trinidad, an outward bound sailing ship was passing through the "Jaws of the Dragon," while a little to our right the "Serpent's Mouth," was open between the Orinoco and the island to admit the *Dahomè*, of the Pickford and Black line, to Port of Spain.

On our road to San Fernando, we passed through groves of bread-fruit-trees, oranges, mangoes and papaws. The road was hedged with varieties of the hibiscus, blazing with crimson, pink and fawn colours. Tropical nature is ever bountiful and generous to prodigality, and let a man be what he will he cannot withhold his admiration of the wonderful creations of God that are here all around him in luxuriant profusion.

As we drew near to San Fernando, the plantain and banana plantations added to the wealth and

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

beauty of the landscape. The plantain must be cooked before eating, but the banana is always eaten in the raw. The banana flowers and fruits, but never seeds, and is propagated by clippings. It goes back to remote times. Alexander's officers conversed with the sages of India, seated in its shade and partaking of its delicious fruit, hence the name *sapientum* given the plant, which also bears the title of Musa, the fair daughter of Jupiter. The banana is of Malay origin. How did it find its way to South America? The feet of birds have carried seeds thousands of miles, while the cocoanut has floated everywhere in the great ocean currents. But the banana has no seeds, nor has it a casing like the cocoanut to bear it on the ocean waves. Is it possible that in prehistoric days it was brought by man to this continent, and that after all is said and written, Lemuria may have existed and the lost Atlantis been a reality?

The suburbs of San Fernando are charming to the eye and fair to look upon. Here on a gentleman's lawn was the largest ceiba I have yet seen in the West Indies. This is the silk cotton tree, consecrated to Jumbi by the blacks from immemorial times, the temple of Obeah, and the sacred tree of equatorial Africa. The ceiba, full grown, has a spread of from forty to sixty yards, and is shaped like a huge umbrella. Its massive and buttressed trunk throws out enormous branches, whose boughs coil, twist and intertwine so closely that they form a protective covering from which is pendant every fantastic



## LA BREA—THE LAKE OF PITCH

variety of parasite. Fond as the Trinidad negro is of money you could not bribe him to wound even the bark of the ceiba. To cut it down would be impious and portend misfortune. James Anthony Froude said that he was told by a Jamaica police officer that if a ceiba had to be removed the men who used the axe were liberally dosed with rum to give them courage to defy the devil. In San Fernando I saw for the first time the deadly coral snake, whose beauty tempts innocent children to fondle it.

At last we stood on the banks of La Brea, the famous Lake of Pitch, a horror-haunted stygian of unsounded depths, a mummified lake shunned by the Carib Indians, who believed it to be the abode of lost souls and evil spirits.

In the account given in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, of the battle of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah with the neighbouring princes, fought in the valley of Siddim, it is recorded that "the woodland vale had many slime pits," or fountains of bitumen. The land abounded in petroleum and asphaltum. It was used by Noah in tarring the gopher planks with which the ark was constructed, by the builders of the Tower of Babel, for "they had slime instead of mortar," and in the construction of the walls of Babylon, and no doubt contributed materially to the construction of the cities of the plains. Herodotus mentions the great amount of bitumen he saw in the valley of the Jordan around the shores of the Dead Sea. It was gathered by

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the boatmen and became a valuable article of commerce. In this valley were pockets of bituminous stone—a species of manjack, or New Brunswick albertite, with which the builders of the chapel of “St. John in the Wilderness” lined the interior of the sacred edifice. If Moses deemed these bituminous wells of sufficient importance to entitle them to a place in Holy Writ what would be his emotions if he gazed upon a lake of this extraordinary substance?

On the extremity of this sea-washed island is the greatest deposit of bitumen, or pitch, of which there is any record. How many thousands of years it antedates the Noachic deluge we know not. It may have existed from the birth of time. For fifty years it has yielded immense quantities of asphaltum to Europe and America, and yet there is no appreciable diminution of its bulk or lowering of its shore line. No lead has ever sounded its gloomy depths, and no mathematician has ever been able to measure its contents. Black as Erubian night it reposes in horrible majesty, its surface unruffled by the winds and undisturbed by the hurricane. It rests now, as it always has, in its black winding-sheet, silent and dismal, a lake of death framed in terrifying solitude. Before the daring Spaniard explored its banks it was a desolation of loneliness, over which for untold time the silence of isolation brooded, and on its sinister face nothing that breathed dared to venture. The Arrawak and the Guaraon Indians shunned it as the abode of demons, and from afar

## LA BREA—THE LAKE OF PITCH

looked upon it with awe and superstitious fear. Such is La Brea, a gruesome spectacle, an inferno answering to Job's description of the abode of lost souls, "*ubi nullus ordo sed sempiternus horror regnat*," a huge unfinished mountain of coal stopped in transit by some frightful cataclysm, or arrested in development by one of nature's awful forces. Its surroundings are like those of the Dead Sea in the days of Abraham, "a land of brimstone and of burning, which is not sown, nor beareth, nor has any grass growing thereon."

Out of this lake Raleigh dug the pitch to caulk his vessel when he came to Trinidad in quest of the elusive El Dorado. Geologists rave over it, disagree, shake their heads, and come away. At one time in the earth's age it was a paradise of vegetation, throwing one back to the carboniferous period when huge oil-bearing plants and monster gum trees were stored in the earth's great warehouse, when God was preparing the earth for the coming of man. La Brea, during the rainy season, solidifies on its surface, but returns again to its liquid state when the sun shines. It is a pitch farm of one hundred acres of a mixture of slime and bitumen which is liberating, during the day, carbonic acids and carbureted hydrogen. The generated heat causes a slow decomposition and resolves at times into petroleum and sulphurated hydrogen. Scattered around on its banks and shores are silurian rocks of immeasurable age, beds of dark sand and shale, yellow with sulphur or black with carbonaceous matter.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

On the eastern side of this mountain-wonder is a pit which throws out asphaltum with violent explosives, accompanied with smoke and flames, and on the west at Punta de la Brea is another vent surrounded by small cones of slime and bitumen. Natural gas pours out of fissures and crevices as through half-inch pipes. It is said that this gas is carbureted hydrogen produced by decomposition of lignite or of some carboniferous stratum.

And now, here's an interesting piece of gossip. Many years ago that brave old sea hero, Admiral Dundonald, after whom the principal street of Punta de la Brea is named, and the father or grandfather of the general at one time in command of the Canadian forces, once visited this island, and believing that the pitch would be of incalculable value, and failing to buy the lake from the government, he purchased the land stretching from the mountain slope to the shore. The pitch under the sun's heat expands, and naturally expands most towards the line of least resistance, that is down the slope into the Dundonald land. Moreover the hill sweats pitch and exudes pitch into the same estate, where it is collected and marketed. Now comes the "Trinidad Pitch Company" and files a provisional injunction restraining the Dundonalds from selling a quart of the bitumen. The company leases La Brea and its contents from the Trinidad government at a rental of \$60,000 per year, and claims that the Dundonald pitch belongs to them, and the island courts sustained their contention. The defendants had moved to dissolve

## LA BREA—THE LAKE OF PITCH

the injunction, and failing, appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. This is the story as it was told to me, my informant adding that in a hurricane a few years before, the oranges of a plantation were blown into the land of a neighbouring planter who gathered and sold them. The court compelled him to make restitution. But what will be the judgment of the Judicial Committee in the Dundonald case?



## CHAPTER VIII

### MARTINIQUE AND ST. PIERRE

Roam through the silent city of the dead,  
Explore each spot where still in ruin grand  
Her shapeless piles and tottering columns stand.

—Byron.

NOWHERE on the fair face of the earth is there a lovelier or more romantic island than Martinique. Around it poets, historians, novelists and artists have woven a veil of romance and poetry which falls over it and around it in gauze-like tenderness. In France, Martinique has become an *enfant gâté*—a spoiled daughter—dear to the maternal heart by the fascination of its frailties. It is a fetich—an idol, that since the days of the Empress Josephine, who was cradled here, invites the adoration of the sensualist and the worship of the sybarite. They have surrounded it with an aureole of natural and animal beauty, of sensuous romance, of voluptuous delight, and have pictured to the imagination of the sensualist a Mohammedan paradise. Martinique inhaled lovingly the perfumed incense offered to it by carnal Paris, grew more wanton in her pleasures and flaunted her meritorious charms, her infidelities, her contempt for religion and morality, openly and defiantly.

Few West Indian cities could surpass St. Pierre in wealth, commerce, industry and learning. Its

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

buildings were architecturally beautiful and substantial, its churches the handsomest and richest, its public institutions were many and well built and its stores reminded one of the great bazaars of Is-pahan. Commercially the city was very prosperous, the Sidon of the Antilles. Her artisans and skilled mechanics were deft of hand, and heravenued streets were ever the scene of gaiety and activity. Her creole population, negroes, mulattoes, quadroons and octoroons, were handsome, shapely and filled with animation and vivacity. In fact St. Pierre was a most charming place for its own people, the wonder and admiration of visitors, and the boast and pride of La Belle France. There were splendid temples built to the honour and glory of God, a devout and zealous clergy, religious communities of pious and accomplished nuns, and a respectable and fairly numerous body of citizens whose lives were religiously and morally irreproachable. "But," writes on May 28th, 1902, the editor of the *Dominica Guardian*, who visited St. Pierre a few weeks before its destruction, "in the midst of religion the people were extremely irreligious. Some did not believe in the existence of God; many ridiculed His might and power and scoffed at the mention of His name. In a word, the great mass of the people lived in open rebellion against their Creator. Living under conditions similar to the Sodomites of old; revelling in blasphemy and sacrilege, provoking the Divine Hand to wrath—which of us who worships God doubts the cause of the destruction of St. Pierre?"



## MARTINIQUE AND ST. PIERRE

In the short space of twelve years preceding the doom of the city the island was scourged with calamitous warnings. Smallpox rioted among the people and ravaged every household. The pitiful wails of mothers bereft of their sons and daughters were heart-rending. Then a devastating hurricane swept the island, killing hundreds of people, impoverishing thousands and menacing the land with famine. Nor was this all. Fort de France, the civil capital, was reduced to ashes two years after the cyclone, entailing enormous losses on its inhabitants. A priest, a prophet who they said was mad with piety and learning, passed from end to end of Martinique, entering the towns and villages and the houses of the people, warning them of God's awful retribution on sin and blasphemy and exhorting them to prayer and penance. "The effect," said Father Mary, the parish priest of Morne Rouge to me, "was only partial. A few—a limited number—gave practical proofs that the good priest's words had not fallen upon barren soil but the majority continued to revel in their irreligious and profane habits."

In company with two gentlemen from St. Louis, I visited St. Pierre on October 18th. Fortunately, we were able to go overland, for the authorities, a few weeks before our visit, had a staff of a hundred negroes and several mule teams clearing the road. Banks of ashes, cinders, lapilli, and arenaceous trap lined the highway, and were piled up many feet high, as with us when the railroad tracks are cleared

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

after a heavy snowstorm. At two P.M. we stood over the site of the lost city. There were no ruins; nothing but a few feet of one of the cathedral towers and that of the Lycée were visible; everything, houses, fine residences, public buildings, convents and schools, and thirty-three thousand human bodies lay buried for all time under sixty-five feet of volcanic dust. Titus plowed up Jerusalem and sowed salt in the furrows; Scipio Africanus, after the senate had voted him a triumphal entry into Rome, shouted on the steps of the Forum: "*Carthago fuit*," but Jerusalem and Carthage were striking and memorable ruins many years after the Huns sacked Rome. There is absolutely nothing left, if we except the few feet of the cathedral tower, to show that there ever was a city where St. Pierre is buried for evermore.

It is well to remember that a terrible conflagration followed the eruption of May 8th, and that for thirty-six hours the city was a burning pile. On the eighteenth another and fiercer eruption followed, casting down many of the walls which were left. Then, on July 9th an eruption whose detonations shook the houses and rang the church bells at Barbadoes, eighty miles away, and carried fear into St. Lucia and other West India Isles, overturned the remaining walls and buried the ruins. On the night of August 30th, Pelee again broke out, and for thirty-three hours rained upon the site incandescent sand, fine dust and stones.

And now before I advance further I must record some of the awful and painful occurrences that

## MARTINIQUE AND ST. PIERRE

preceded the ruin of St. Pierre. It is well to remember that contrary to nearly all volcanic precedents, the eruption of Pelee did not break out in the old crater, but from the side facing the city. Carbet, a village one and a half miles from St. Pierre was untouched. On Good Friday, April 5th, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the cathedral was crowded with men, women and children who had come together to hear a sermon on the Passion of Our Lord, to venerate the crucifix and make the stations of the cross. At about the same hour a crowd of mulattoes, quadroons and negroes, led by a French free-thinker—an imported agitator—improvised a socialistic demonstration. The weird nature of their proceedings added additional horror to the coming apocalyptic catastrophe of fiery streams of scalding mud and torrents of boiling water that in a month devastated the unfortunate island—the “Fair Isle of June”—and its capital.

Well, on this Good Friday afternoon, the radical socialists, mestizos, quadroons, octoroons and negroes, accompanied by agitators imported from abroad, formed a sacrilegious procession in parody of the Via Dolorosa from Pilate's house to Calvary. With a rope around its neck they dragged a living pig outside the city. Here they nailed it to a cross, lifted it on high, and with shouts and curses apostrophized it. They hailed it as Jesus Christ, crowned its wretched head with thorns, pierced its side and put a board above it with the inscription “J. C., King of the Christians,” and, yell-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

ing and dancing like fiends, carried it through the streets.

Then at about the same hour another procession of human devils, lashed into fury by the incitement and harangues of white agitators, ascended Pelee, uprooted a great crucifix that had stood there for many years, and amid obscene rites and blasphemous songs, cast the sacred figure into the crater, their leader yelling, as it sank out of sight, "Go where Thou deservest to go, into Thine own Hell."

I record this as I heard it from the lips of those in Fort de France, who had it from eye witnesses, and I may add that it is corroborated by Colonel Pellhouse, who witnessed the frightful scene. The awful outrage—it may be but a coincidence—lends additional horror to an orgie which could never have occurred in a colony whose home administration entertained a proper respect for religion and its observances. The influential and more sober part of the population pleaded with the citizens, exasperated by the abominable performance, and restrained them from lynching the organizers of so damnable a travesty of the most tremendous of all tragedies.

Commenting on these atrocious indecencies the editor of the *Dominica Guardian* in the issue of May 28th, 1902, writes: "The profanities on last Good Friday at St. Pierre were but the repetitions of similar profanities and sacrilegiousness of which we know too much. But an outraged Divinity having hushed up the actors forever we will say no more about them."

## MARTINIQUE AND ST. PIERRE

In the February number of the *Fortnightly Review* following the disaster, Mr. Richard Davey, an English controversialist and writer of note, writes: "On Good Friday the radicals and socialists of Martinique crucified again the Son of God and made a laughing stock and a mockery of Him."

Nine days after the eruption, August Iaccaci, George Varian and George Kennan collaborated in a description of the volcanic ruin, which they visited in the interest of the *Century Magazine*. They write: "Before the eruption it was considered silly for the men to keep up these childish practices (prayers to God, to the Blessed Virgin and the saints), and many a young woman waited till the blood had cooled, life lost its savour and death was near before renewing them. But now God, the Virgin Mary, and the saints were the only real powers who could protect one against another eruption. Even the negro and coloured politicians, red-hot socialists—socialism here spells atheism and immorality—were much too wise to neglect such powerful help against the mysterious enemy."

In all the paroxysmal eruptions of Pelee, there was no phenomenon like unto that of May 8th. On April 5th the appalling sacrilege—the sin against the Holy Ghost—was committed. On April 6th Pelee awoke from its sleep of fifty-four years. Situated on the northern end of the island, and rising to a height of four thousand four hundred and fifty feet the great mount was visible forty miles out in the Caribbean Sea. On April 6th it began

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

to emit smoke, and continued to get more and more active until May 8th. On that day at three P.M., a torrent of boiling mud swept down the mountain at a terrific speed, reaching the sea, five miles distant, in about three minutes. On its rush to the open roadstead it destroyed a great sugar factory—the Usine Guerin—the Guerin residence and outbuildings, and devoured every animal on the plantation. The family and servants, after the boiling river had swept past, were never seen again.

I reserve for another chapter the record of the Pelee eruptions, confining myself now to the mysterious phenomena which accompanied that of May 8th. At about half-past six on that memorable Wednesday morning columns of white smoke suddenly began to issue from the side of the mountain in a direct line for St. Pierre. At a quarter to eight an angry, growling rumbling was heard, a colossal fissure appeared, the mountain trembled from peak to base, and a mighty, uniform mass of black smoke burst with dizzy rapidity on the valley. At once an avalanche of incandescent sand was launched against the city, followed immediately by the report of an explosion greater than that of a thousand cannon. Notice that the storm of burning sand travelled faster than the sound. The people of the city nearest the mountain died at once. Then there swept through St. Pierre, so close to the tornado of sand as to be almost a part of it, a cyclone of deadly and mephitic gases, which penetrated walls and closed doors and brought death to man and beast.



*From stereograph, copyright 1902, by Underwood & Underwood, New York*

MONT PELEE IN ERUPTION, MAY, 1902, MARTINIQUE





## MARTINIQUE AND ST. PIERRE

With this rush of fatal gases came a river of burning air, wide as the city, and cleaning up what had escaped the storm of hot sand and the hurricane of noxious gases. For nearly all death was instantaneous. The priest with the persons to whom he was giving Holy Communion died together; the nun died at her prayers; mother and babe gasped once and were dead; the wedding party on the way to the altar sank, never to rise again; the young libertine sleeping off his night's dissipation, the family at breakfast, never moved—they had no time to move. "Their bosoms once heaved and forever grew still."

If the ruin of St. Pierre was a punishment for sacrilege and unheard-of blasphemy, the world must acknowledge it was complete, even to the burying of the dead.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE CITY OF THE DEAD

Those that can pity, here  
May if they think it well, let fall a tear.  
The subject will deserve it.

*Prologue to Henry VIII.*

THE island of Martinique will for all time live in history, for in the annals of the world there is no record of a visitation so calamitous and appallingly sudden in its effect as that which destroyed, on May 8th, 1902, the beautiful city of St. Pierre and its people. Beyond denial the island and the people are yet fair to look upon. The negroes even are unlike the blacks of other lands. Their negro-French would be unintelligible in Paris and yet it is the softest, sweetest, most musical speech I ever heard from human lips. It knows no grammar; but it is the very essence of symphony and melody. The natural beauties of the island are, even now, after months of volcanic ruin and torrential storm, a fascinating study. I well remember the morning I ascended the side of the headland and began to get command of a prospect, which, as it then appeared in the morning light and sunshine, the opalescent sea in calm, Fort de France embowered in palms, and the valleys, mountains and picturesque villages in repose, seemed to me the most exquisite view I had ever beheld in my wanderings.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

But the dead city of St. Pierre, which was destroyed a few months before my visit to the island by the most disastrous of all volcanic eruptions, looks to-day like what it really is, a desolation dominated by the yet angry Pelee. The morning our party left Fort de France to visit St. Pierre the citizens and planters of the southern end of the island were unconcernedly engaged in their ordinary occupations. Our road carried us through a country painfully sad in the weird melancholy of its memories, and surpassing grand in the ruggedness of its outlines and the beauty of its mountain scenery. Around us everywhere were volcanic boulders and moss-covered rocks.

“Hoary with age, while yet the Greek

Was heaving the Pentilicus to symmetry and form  
And building on its dome, the glittering Parthenon.”

On our right cascades leaping from perpendicular crags tumbled over a confusion of ancient trachyte, purifying from volcanic dust the palm-tree, the bread-fruit and ceiba trees covered with pink-white blossoms. Now a laughing stream came rippling on through a charming valley whose sides were shaded by forests and robed with luxuriant vegetation, where curtains of vines festooned the cliffs and precipices that rose from the grand sweep of mountain and hill. Masses of volcanic rock covered with mosses, lichens, orchids and vegetable parasites, draped with vines and lianas, lay around us, tumbled in confusion as if giants threw them in titanic combat. Here also were curious vines from the trunks

## THE CITY OF THE DEAD

of which depended to the earth delicate shoots which took root and supported the parent stems. Strange gum trees—"gemmiens" they call them—that rise one hundred feet into the air, yielded their wondrously shaped crowns to the passing breeze. The ashes must have fallen in almost incredible quantities for here and there lay immense heaps soaked with torrential rains.

From Fort de France to St. Pierre, by the road we were now travelling, is twenty-one miles, though by an air line only fifteen. The devastation deepened as we advanced. The branches of the trees were broken off and strewed the ground. The streams which during the rainy season swelled to rushing rivers were almost dry. We entered Morne Rouge, the Newport of the island; the desolation was appalling. Here was the church of Father Mary, of whom you have heard. Out of the catastrophe of a whirlwind of ashes and six great explosions has come this interesting and brave priest, a man as sweet in heart and brave in spirit as any Daudet wrote about. The famed summer and health resort, its dismantled buildings, princely gardens and plazas, lay under a shroud of ashes. Another mile and the ridge narrowed to a sharp *arrête* by which was yet standing a tall crucifix. Crosses, with life-like images in iron of our Saviour on them, marked the boundaries of each parish in Martinique. There was a shrine here where fresh flowers were laid by pious hands every morning. We enter the parish of the Grand Reduit and the ravages of fire begin to assume a most grue-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

some and gloomy aspect. Our road now descends to the valley of the Roxalene, into Trois Ponts, the suburbs of St. Pierre, a confused medley of stones, uprooted trees and wreckage. Over all there broods the silence of the grave, save alone the intermittent break from the wash of the sea. Through a lane walled with ash and volcanic sand we move on. Through the telescopic passage we pass and are coming out when, "*Arrête!*" (halt!) and we stop. "Your passes, gentlemen," and an armed sentry bars the pass. With us was Colonel Gendron of the French army absent on furlough, who at once produced our permits. The gendarme reads the names, salutes the colonel and asks us to wait a moment.

Presently the captain of the guard appears, gives the military salute to his superior officer and speaks, "*Mon Colonel vous êtes bien venu; gentlemen follow me.*" In a few minutes we reach the quarters of the police who are here to exclude any one without a pass from the acting governor of Martinique and shoot every negro ghoul who may enter to loot. "Here, gentlemen, throw up your tent," spoke the captain, "you will be outside the danger line." That afternoon we had for guide, courteously assigned to us by the captain of the guard, a member of the police force who was one of the rescue party which entered St. Pierre the third day after the terrific explosion. We passed over the ruins of the two orphan asylums, the workshop and boys' home of Ste. Anne, the remains of the Lycée and the convent

## THE CITY OF THE DEAD

of St. Paul de Chartres, where twenty sisters and a hundred and thirty-three young ladies lie buried for evermore under twenty feet of solidified mud and ashes. The cathedral tower and that of the Lycée were still standing. The hands of the clock on the Lycée tower stopped at 8.10 A.M. They were now pointing to the fatal numbers. From the interior of the cathedral were taken one hundred and fifty bodies of men, women and young girls, scarcely clothed, their flesh tumefied and falling to pieces. Of the eighteen hundred others supposed to have crowded into the building that awful morning, of the officiating priests and their attendants, nothing remained but charred and undistinguishable bones. The church is now but a heap of confused ruins. At the southern end of the Street of Victor Hugo, our guide tells us, they found heaps of decaying bodies, horribly disfigured and showing by the contraction of their limbs, how awful must have been the death agony. While St. Pierre was perishing the Prêcheur River overflowed its banks, deluging the church, the parsonage and the little town hugging the city. The whole place is now covered with sand and rocks. We passed up Morne d'Orange to the south-west, following the winding road till we reached the plateau of the hill. Here, looking down upon a part of the city, stood, before the fire, a metal statue of the Blessed Virgin fourteen feet high. It must have weighed several tons. It now lay on the ground washed clean by the rains, forty feet away from its granite pedestal. It

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

lay with the head pointing to Pelee, and the direction showed that the blast was travelling straight from the mountain towards the city.

On this plateau was the fort commanding the roadstead; when struck by the blast from the burning mountain its magazine exploded and the destruction of the fort and the death of officers and men was but one act. We picked our way through a heap of confused ruins and entered the depression formed when the Sèche River changed its course. The line of fire and the zone of the cleavage of destruction were here clearly defined. We crawled over heaps of dèbris and got into the Street of Victory. "Here," said our guide, stopping us, "stood a house where we found six bodies, three of them apparently asleep. In a small room lay a young girl who had finished her toilet before the upright mirror. In her right hand she held a Prayer Book, around her left wrist was wound her rosary. No doubt she was just going to mass."

Worn out with exertion and depressed in mind we retraced our steps. On our way to the police quarters we saw in the roadstead the masts of the *Rorima* still showing above the waters. From the ruins around us no one may reconstruct the city or tell the intimate life of its inhabitants. From our guide we learned that the iron railings of the balconies and the iron fences protecting the gardens were twisted and bent by the whirlwind of fire. The lighthouse was razed and the trees growing in the streets were charred, and showed sandblast



## THE CITY OF THE DEAD

erosion on the sides which faced the crater, while the lee sides were still covered with bark. When on May 5th the White River—so called from the iridescence of its waters—which swept into eternity the Guerin family and twenty-five others, hit the sea, the waters withdrew as if affrighted. It was an infuriated torrent hissing in its anger like a monstrous python, and carrying rocks, trees, fragments of houses, dead bodies and smoking mud with it in its devastating rush. All night this river of boiling mud rushed to the sea, and when daylight broke St. Pierre looked with stupefaction on the desolation.

After we returned to our quarters we sat till midnight hearing from the captain of the guard the painful and harrowing details of the cataclysm, and watching the play of fire on the lips and sides of the crater. Lightning was flashing incessantly over and around the crest of Morne La Croix, the highest peak of the mountain, the rising steam formed a cloud tremulous and shifting, and down the flanks of the monster rivulets of red matter, like blood, were streaming. The mountain gave forth a dull glow and the outlines of its summit were visibly thrown out by a fitful, intense and reddish glare.

On my return to Fort de France I was privileged, one morning after mass, to pass a half-hour with the parish priest of Morne Rouge, Père Mary, who was the last to abandon the pleasant village. He brought with him the brave and faithful remnant

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

which stood by him during the awful days succeeding the death of St. Pierre.

“What, *Mon Père*,” I asked, “was the actual population of the ill-fated city when the rain of death fell upon it? In Canada and the States so many and varied were the numbers reported in our journals that even now we do not approximately know the extent of the calamity.”

“Well,” he replied, “we have very often gone over the figures, and have agreed upon thirty-six thousand. In our diocesan ordo [records] are the names of twenty-seven thousand souls for the city of St. Pierre. Add to this number perhaps three thousand refugees from the neighbouring communes who had fled to the city for safety, at least five hundred sailors, who perished with their ships in the roadstead, the dead of the Guerin plantation, those who dropped dead at Carbet, and were drowned when *Le Prêcheur* was submerged in the deluge of boiling mud, and I believe the number of victims will be thirty-six or thirty-seven thousand. I may mention,” he continued, “that among these were His Excellency the governor of Martinique, M. Mouttet and his pious wife; Colonel Gerbault, and Madame Gerbault, and many who went from here to view the volcanic phenomena. In this unparalleled holocaust perished twenty-four priests, twenty-eight sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, who attended the orphans and the destitute; thirty-three sisters of the teaching order of St. Joseph de Cluny; and ten sisters of the D’Elivorande, hospital nurses. Of the

## THE CITY OF THE DEAD

many professors of the Lycée only five absentees are left."

He was hurrying through the names of the distinguished families that perished in the unparalleled desolation when the half-opened door of the room swung wide, and the Rev. Jean Alteroche, of Morne Vert, near St. Pierre, entered. I would like to describe the appearance and personality of this heroic and devout man, but time presses. He was among the first file which entered the ruined city, and his description of what he saw and experienced was of harrowing, but absorbing interest.

"I am told," he said, courteously bowing himself into the conversation, "that many in America, even priests and bishops, hint that St. Pierre perished for its sins."

I confessed my own leaning in the direction of that opinion.

"Well," he replied, "can you name a city in America that deserves to be spared?"

I was silent, and with the innate courtesy of the well-bred and cultured ecclesiastic, he relieved me of my embarrassment by directing the conversation into another channel.

"When we entered the city the morning after its destruction," said the priest, "the solitude was oppressive and the ruin appalling. Along the beach steam columns were rising from the hot chocolate-coloured mud which poured down the ravines and river-beds and were flowing into the ocean. The desolation was unparalleled. Frightful

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

sights met my view, all telling of the suddenness of the catastrophe. The atmosphere and volcanic heat were decomposing the dead, and the odour was that of a tropical battlefield after a prolonged engagement. In the ruins of the cathedral, where three priests and two thousand people perished, the smell was overwhelming—a sweet, sickening odour peculiarly the property of dead human flesh, tainting the air. In ten seconds all activity, all life, human and animal, the throb of industry—factories, churches, convents, hospitals, schools—everything, had ceased to exist. We entered the homes of the people and found the dead sitting at the coffee table, a father, his wife and two children, so lifelike that we spoke to them, but alas, the dead are not courteous and did not rise to welcome us. In one place a man had fallen from his chair, his pipe was in his hand and the caraffa of wine on the table was fused at the neck by the heat-blast. We upended it, but no wine came out. Nature did the corking, and unless you break the decanter, which is now in our museum, its wine will be an inseparable part of it. To the south-west of the city, looking towards Morne d'Orange, stood the home of M. Hudon, at whose house I was many times a guest. It was not only a beautiful, but a refined home. Here dwelt M. Hudon, his wife and family of ten. A tasteful, wrought-iron fence protected the lawn and its fountain. We entered from the rear and on the verandah looking to the mountain we found two bodies. They were perhaps watching



*From stereograph, copyright 1902, by Underwood & Underwood, New York*

FROM ORANGE HILL LOOKING NORTH-EAST OVER DEAD ST. PIERRE TO MONT PELEE, MARTINIQUE



## THE CITY OF THE DEAD

Pelee when they were struck by the tornado of steam and noxious gases. As we walked out by the front entrance a horrible and agonizing scene was before us. There lay the whole family, a group so sad, so heartrending, that it will forever stand before me. Ten dead bodies in all. Two small children had been running ahead. Neither of them showed any evidence of suffering, but their attitude as they lay indicated that they had been in a hurry. Then came three bodies of men and women, twenty to thirty-five years of age. Behind them was the corpse of Madame Hudon, and beside her was the body of her husband, his arm spread out as if to protect his wife and children."

"Pardon me, *Mon Père*," I interposed, "did I understand you aright, that in ten seconds all life perished?"

"Yes, the instantaneous character of the force projected against the city was like unto a flash of lightning. The whirlwind from the side of the mountain and the death of the people seemed but one act, so quickly did the one follow upon the other. A moment only was given them for thought. The rushing cloud, charged with steam and sulphurous acid, crushed, ruined, blighted, and swept into eternity all—all of that magnificent community of youth and beauty, of virile strength and honourable age."

"But," I interrupted, "if all perished, how was this known?"

"On the fatal morning, I, with three others from the hill of Morne Vert, witnessed the destruction of

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the fated city, and after the hurricane of death had passed we saw no human being, though our achromatic glasses magnified thirty-eight diameters."

Père Mary, who had been summoned to the waiting-room of the presbytery, now entered and joined in the conversation.

"You will bear in mind," he said, "that of the two hundred thousand souls in the island of Martinique only eight thousand of them are whites. The rest are mulattoes, mestizos, quadroons, octoroons, and blacks. When St. Pierre was destroyed there perished about eight hundred pure whites, not including four hundred of the *tente-en-ayre*, so near to the real white that they can only be distinguished from him by a slight odour, and then only by the creole, or native-born white."

Believing that I was perhaps trespassing on the time of *Monsieur le Curé*, as the parish priest is so courteously addressed everywhere in this island, I rose to express my appreciation of his kindness, and bid him good-morning. He invited me to return for five o'clock dinner—they take only two meals in Martinique—as he wished to speak to me of Canada, more especially of Quebec and its people.

That evening I bid good-bye for all time to Martinique, and as our boat steamed by the buried city of St. Pierre I looked my last upon its huge grave, and, addressing the dead in the pathetic language of the parish priest of Fort de France who blessed and sprinkled with holy water the ashes covering the victims of the holocaust, I said aloud:



## THE CITY OF THE DEAD

“Beloved and unfortunate beings, old men, children, young men and maidens fallen so tragically, we weep for you; we, the unhappy survivors of this desolation mourn for you. Purified by the peculiar virtues and exceptional merits of this horrible sacrifice you have arisen on this triumphal day of your Lord to triumph with Him and to receive from His own hand the crown of glory. It is in this hope that we seek the strength to survive you.”



## CHAPTER X

### IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS

. . . I beheld

The imperial city, her far circling walls,  
Her garden groves and stately palaces,  
Her temples mountain size, her thousand roofs,  
And when I saw her might and majesty,  
My mind misgave me then.

—*Madoc*, I, 6.

FROM El Paso, Texas, on the Rio Grande, the run to Mexico City is twelve hundred miles. For a thousand miles the Mexican Central passes through an alkali desert, frightful in the desolation of its solitude and its pitiful sterility. For forty hours not a solitary tree was to be seen, nor blade of grass to cheer us. We shipped volcanic dust in bucketfuls, and when at last we entered the valley of Mexico, by brush and whisk we began to unload the real estate presented to us by the Mexican Central on the way. At Zacatecas all nature changed; around and towards us sloped the volcanic hills hoary with age, and worn with æons of time, atmospheric erosion and innumerable downfalls of sub-tropical rains. We passed through two hundred miles of a floral and vegetable paradise. Herds were browsing hoof-deep in the rich alfalfa grass; picturesque villages dotted the valley, and hundreds of acres of the maguey plant, from the juice of which *pulque* is

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

distilled, added to the variety of the landscape. Pulque is the national drink of Mexico. The maguey plant is cultivated in fields, holding from three hundred and sixty to seven hundred plants. When extracted the liquid is like green water in appearance, and is odourless and tasteless. In a few hours it begins to ferment, and has the appearance of milk. The plant takes about eight years to mature, and produces for about five months, during which it yields three hundred and sixty gallons of pulque. From this plant is also distilled the alcoholic drinks, *tequila* and *mezcal*.

In many of its features Mexico is unlike any city in the world. Its climate is superb. Its splendid parks, alamedas and gardens, its magnificent churches and palaces, the museums and galleries of paintings and statuary, the historic cathedral, the brown races, offspring of Spaniards and Mexican tribes, the strangely picturesque costumes and the dwarfed and tawny complexioned Indians who silently appear and disappear on the streets like apparitions, separate Mexico from all other cities and place it in a class by itself. The centre of activity in Mexico City is the Zocalo, the most interesting and historic spot in the valley of Mexico. It is the soul of the capital—a beautiful, oblong square upon which no less than nine of the principal streets of the city focus, all the street car lines converge, and crowds of loafers, strangers and busy people gather at all hours of the day and well into the night.

Surrounded by the principal public buildings,

## IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS

it has been the scene of the most important events in Mexican history. All the riots and public demonstrations take place in the Zocalo. Here the wandering Aztecs saw in the heavens, in 1312, the cross, the symbolic sign of promise. Here, where now stands the great cathedral, they built their first temple, the colossal pantheon—Teocalli, they called it—where thousands of prisoners were sacrificed to the war god. Everybody passes there at least once, and often several times a day. If you want to meet a friend, all you have to do is to wait in the Zocalo and he will be sure to turn up sooner or later. Standing in the centre of the plaza, you are surrounded by historic monuments. Directly in front are the towers of one of the greatest cathedrals in the world. The east tower marks the western boundary of the Aztec temple dedicated to the god Tlaloc. To the right is the National Palace built on the site of the home of Montezuma. To the left is the City Hall, where once stood the Aztec Hall of Assembly. The Zocalo is always full of peddlers, beggars, and pickpockets, and here let me add that the Mexican pickpocket takes no back seat from any man of his profession in the world. He is, as Horace says of the poet, born, not made. He comes, and, like a ghost, disappears, and your watch vanishes with him. As a sleight-of-hand artist he has no equal on the continent of America. He is well-dressed, inoffensive, noiseless, and when he touches you there is no sensation.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

The Thieves' Market is one of the sights and institutions of the city. Two blocks west of the Zocalo is a large square filled with booths, hucksters' shops, and stalls. This is the Thieves' Market, where the dishonest servant may dispose of his petty thefts, and the sneak thief who has "swiped" an umbrella may find a purchaser and no questions asked. The expert pickpocket never enters the precincts of the Thieves' Market; he disposes of his spoils by private sale or at the Monte de Piedad, the national pawnshop. This institution occupies a large space on the western side of the plaza, opposite the cathedral, where once stood the great palace of Montezuma, where the unhappy emperor was taken by Cortez. After the conquest Cortez made the palace his headquarters. The pawnshop was founded in 1776 by Pedro Romero, Count of Regala, and owner of the famous mines of Real Monte. His idea was to open a place where any one could borrow money at a very low rate of interest and be saved from the usurious charges of pawnbrokers and money lenders. He endowed it with \$300,000. So low are the charges that it is really a boon to the people. When the trifling interest is not paid the articles are sold, and whatever remains over from the fixed charge is returned to the original owner. It is an immense establishment, one of the most noted institutions of Mexico, and has survived many seasons of financial depression.

A few minutes' walk from the Zocalo brings you to the Alameda, the Queen's Park of Mexico City,

## IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS

a masterpiece of landscape gardening. I know of nothing of the kind in America to compare with it. There are only forty acres, but these acres represent the application of Mexican art to the development of natural resources. The metallic castings of mythological designs, the bewildering variety of flowers, ferns, giant palms, and tropical plants, the *glorietas*—circular spaces with fountains in the centre—the cypress-rimmed promenades converging to a common centre, and the perfume of southern roses tempt one to return again and again to this terrestrial paradise. On Sundays and feast days it becomes a theatre of a most brilliant and fashionable assemblage. Bright coloured awnings are raised over the wide walks, chairs are placed on both sides, and at twelve o'clock the crowds begin to gather. A military band lends *éclat* to the occasion, and at one o'clock the promenades are a kaleidoscope of moving colours.

There are many fine streets in this city, though they are not all Mexican. It resembles Brussels more than any other city, and while it is not laid out on any particular plan one may easily find his way through it. One has to go into the narrow, crooked streets or visit the huge markets to find the real Mexican characteristics. Unfortunately the private residences now going up are built upon plans similar to those of Paris, and there are long blocks of apartment houses arranged upon the French plan. However, the palatial residences of the wealthy Mexicans of the past were built to last, and Mexico

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

will continue to present to the guest within her walls fine examples of the spectacular architecture of the Moors, which is startling in colour, carving, and moulding.

Three blocks from the Alameda Gardens, the famous Paseo de la Reforma commences. It is a boulevard three miles long, running from the heart of the city to Chapultepec, the summer residence of President Diaz. It is a splendid avenue, with four broad asphalt sidewalks, two driveways and two tracks for riders, which are divided by rows of trees.

On feast days and on Sunday and Thursday afternoons, when there are concerts in the *glorietas* and at Chapultepec, the avenue is crowded with brilliant equipages. Every Mexican family with any pretension to social distinction must have a carriage and be seen on the Paseo. The family may feel the sting of close living at home, the ladies will dispense with household necessities and figuratively eat crusts of bread in the kitchen, but it is all right if they can only appear in the afternoon on the Paseo in their own carriage, drawn by their own horses, with a coachman and footman in their own livery. This is the criterion of social respectability.

As the avenue is four hundred feet wide there is no crowding, and good nature, affability, and courtesy rule the brilliant procession. During the afternoon the walks are filled with promenaders, the carriages are full of brightly-dressed women and children, with coachmen and footmen in expensive



## IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS

and showy liveries. Young men and boys resplendent in *charro* suits, with broad-brimmed gold and silver braided sombreros, dash by on fiery ponies. The Paseo at intervals widens into circles called *glorietas*. These circles are two hundred feet in diameter, and enclose large beds of tropical plants. The banks of the central driveway are ornamented for three miles with colossal stone vases and statues of men prominent in Mexican history since the Declaration of Independence. Many fine buildings front upon the boulevard representing early Spanish and Moorish architecture, and attractive examples of the transition period in Mexican constructive art.

An heroic statue of Charles IV of Spain, the largest casting of single bronze and the most notable public monument on the western continent, stands at the entrance to the Paseo. The height of the horse and rider is sixteen feet, and the weight is sixty thousand pounds. This equestrian statue, by the famous sculptor Tolsa, was cast in 1802, and rests on a porphyry pedestal ten feet high. Further on, at the Glorieta de Colon, stands the historic statue of Columbus, by the French sculptor Cordier. The base is of basalt, from which springs a pedestal of Rosa marble, on the squares of which are bronze panels representing the discovery of San Salvador, the façade of the monastery of Santa Maria de la Rabida, the raised letter of Columbus to Sauris, and a scene at the dedication of the monument to Escandon. Crowning all is the bronze statue of

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the discoverer of America, a masterly conception representing Columbus with his right arm pointing to the new continent.

But perhaps the most striking and fascinating figure of Mexican ferro-work is the statue of Guatemozin, the last of the Montezumas, who led the attack on the Spaniards on the night of July 1st, 1520. The night is known in Mexican history as *La Noche Triste*—the night of sorrow—when Cortez lost four hundred and fifty of his men and twenty-six horses. Tacuba is six miles to the west of Mexico City, and near the village still stands the tree under whose shade Cortez sat and summed up the terrible losses he had sustained. The statue is one of the most beautiful monuments in Mexico, well proportioned and perfectly poised. The Aztec chief is represented facing the foes of his nation, and in the act of hurling his battle spear. In the bas-relief of the pedestal are two panels representing Guatemozin in chains, and his torture by the Spaniards.

After the Spaniards had returned to the attack and recaptured the city, they held the famous bacchanal which occasioned the rebuke of the pious Father Olmedo, who, on the following Sunday denounced Cortez and his companions. A rumour had spread among the soldiers that Cortez and the Aztec chief had conspired to conceal the royal treasures of the Montezumas, and Julian de Alderete, one of the Conquistadores, and treasurer of the Crown, waited on Cortez and asked him if



*From stereograph, copyright 1901, by Underwood & Underwood, New York*

STATUE OF GUATEMOZIN, LAST AND NOBLEST OF AZTEC  
EMPERORS, PASEO DE LA REFORMA, MEXICO CITY



## IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS

he knew what his men were saying. Cortez, though aware of the gossip that was current in the army, feigned not to understand, and asked with unconcern, "What do they say?"

"They say," answered Alderete, "that your honour, in connivance with Guatemozin, is concealing the immense treasure of the Aztec Crown and that—"

"By Santiago!" interrupted Cortez, making a movement towards his poniard, "I will cut the tongue out of any man who says so!"

"You may cut the tongues out of your soldiers, but not out of the king's treasurer," retorted Alderete.

Cortez seemed for a moment in doubt what to say or do, and then, biting his lip, replied:

"What you say is indeed grave, but what would you recommend me to do to silence this gossip?"

"There is one course," said Alderete, "that will vindicate you in the eyes of your men, and in that of His Majesty the King. Guatemozin must know where the treasures are hidden. Tell him to bring them forth, and if he refuses, put him to the torture, and if that does not answer, hang him."

"Nothing of the sort shall be done," firmly answered Cortez. "He is my prisoner; I have given him my word that no harm shall befall him, and a Castilian never breaks his word."

"A Castilian keeps his word when pledged to another Castilian, but not when pledged to an infidel, a barbarian. Remember the torments of the sixty-four Castilians, sacrificed on the altars of their heathen gods," returned the treasurer.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

"I remember it," said the great Conquisatadore, "but as Christians we should forget it."

"As you please," spoke back Alderete, "but remember that a friend came to warn you when you stood over the precipice. You are about to forfeit your glories and your conquests, and you will appear in the light of a defrauder of the king's revenue."

Cortez grew pale, and turning aside to the physician Murcia said, "Well, here are the keys of his prison; take him, but remember I wash my hands of this whole business."

Alderete, accompanied by the doctor, went to the prison and brought out the king of the Aztecs and the prince of Tacubaya. Their feet were dipped in oil and roasted before a slow fire. The Tacubaya chief, unable to endure the pain, cried to Guatemozin that he was in awful agony.

"My friend," said the last of the Montezumas, "do not think that I am as comfortable as I would be in my bath."

Such is the story of the torture of the Aztec chiefs, and the part of Pilate played by Cortez, as told by the Spanish historian Diaz, who accompanied Cortez to Mexico.\*

A bust of this heroic Indian—its pedestal containing inscriptions on one side in the Nahuatl tongue, on the other in Spanish recording his "heroic defence of the city of Mexico," adorns the banks of the Viga Canal just outside the Mexican capital.

\*The Aztec chiefs were not tortured to death. They were burned on the feet to force a confession from them, a practice common to all Europe in those days, and in force down to the opening of the eighteenth century.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CATHEDRAL AND NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICO

.....Majesty,  
Power, glory, strength and beauty, all are aisled  
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

—Byron.

NATURALLY the first building to which the stranger turns when he enters Mexico City is the great cathedral. As the visitor to Rome, long before he enters the imperial city, sees from afar the dome of St. Peter's apparently suspended in the air, so the passenger on the Mexican Central catches a glimpse of the royal dome and prodigious towers of this magnificent temple when he is yet many miles from the city. We have no ecclesiastical building in Canada, nor, indeed is there any church in the United States to be compared with it.

The cathedral, "The Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico," is built upon the site of the Aztec temple (the Teocalli) which the Spaniards levelled soon after they captured the city. On the roof of this Aztec pantheon thousands of prisoners were slaughtered, their hearts torn out, and offered in atonement to the Aztec gods. Near this site, also, the memory of the conquest was celebrated for centuries by the "parade of the banner," in which the mayor of the city carried the standard of Cortez, followed

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

by the viceroy, the council, and nobility on horse-back.

When the city was divided into wards this site was set apart for a Christian church, and, in 1523, eleven years before Jacques Cartier entered the St. Lawrence, a church was opened for service. The first stone of the present cathedral was laid in 1573, and its final dedication took place in December, 1667; the immense towers were not completed till 1791, and the cost of the building was over \$2,000,000. This is exclusive of the priceless paintings and Tolsa's famous altar.

The façade, from the sides of which spring the towers, is divided into three parts of various orders of architecture. The lower is severe Doric, the second part Ionic, supporting a Corinthian storey. The bas-reliefs, statues, friezes, bases and capitals are carved in white marble, producing with the dark gray stone a very charming colour effect. The towers are two hundred and four feet high, and in two divisions, lower, Doric, and upper, Ionic, capped with bell-shaped domes of native limestone. The cornices of these towers are surmounted by balustrades of carved stone, upon which repose beautiful chiselled vases. Beneath the domes are pedestals supporting marble statues of the doctors of the church and the patriarchs of the Jews.

Over the central entrance are blazoned the arms of the republic of Mexico—an eagle perched on a cactus, strangling a snake. Above all rises the dome, surmounted by its single, graceful lantern.



## CATHEDRAL AND MUSEUM OF MEXICO

In the towers hang a number of costly bells, the largest seventeen feet in height and worth \$10,000. From east to west this great Christian temple measures four hundred and sixty feet, and from north to south four hundred feet. It has an interior height of one hundred and seventy-nine feet. The interior is in the form of a Latin cross and has five naves. In the centre are two rows of eight pillars, which support the vaulted roof, above which rises a splendid octagonal dome. There are fourteen chapels, or side altars, separated from the body of the building by upright iron railings. Back of the second pair of pillars the choir commences, and here also is the Altar of Forgiveness, over which are two valuable paintings, the "Blessed Virgin holding the Infant Jesus," and "The Resurrection."

Two immense organs in carved wood rise almost to the arches of the choir. Over the entrance to the choir is a very old life-size carving of the crucifixion, in which the thieves are roped, not nailed to their crosses. At the northern end of the cathedral is the Altar of the Kings, a mass of gold and gilt, and the most imposing in the temple. The gilded cross which crowns the dome of the altar almost touches the arches of the roof. It was modelled after the one in the cathedral of Seville in Spain and was done by the same artist.

The side paintings, "The Adoration of the Kings" and "The Assumption," are particularly fine. Beneath this altar are buried the heads of the patriots Allende, Jiminez, Aldama, and the warrior priest,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

Hidalgo, "the father of Mexican independence." In one of the side chapels rest the remains of the first Mexican emperor, Augustin de Iturbide, and the famous general, Anastasio Bustamente. Some of the most valuable paintings in America adorn the walls of the cathedral, its sacristy and chapter house, such as the "Church and the Assumption," by Juan Correa; "The Triumph of the Sacrament," "The Immaculate Conception," "The Glory of St. Michael," by Villapando; "The Holy Family," by Murillo; "The Virgin of Bethlehem," by Cortona, and by an unknown artist, "John of Austria Imploring the Virgin at the Battle of Lepanto." In the baptistry is a fine fresco by De Aguine, and among others of great merit a painting of Murillo, "John the Baptist in the Desert."

I expected when entering the cathedral to examine some fine examples of Mexican plastic art, but though I saw some excellent statuary in stucco, painted in many cases with good taste, I did not see within the building a solitary statue in onyx or marble; nor have I seen in any church in Mexico, and it is a city of churches, a solitary marble statue. On enquiry I was told that marble was too severe and cold to appeal to Mexican devotion. The Mexican loves bright colours, he lives in a land luxuriating in a profusion of flowers of wondrous tints and perfumes. He has acquired a taste for attractive colours and he seeks the gratification of his taste even in his devotion. He contends that statues, like paintings, should represent the saint as

## CATHEDRAL AND MUSEUM OF MEXICO

he or she was when upon earth, and hence the artist very often clothes his subject in the garb of the religious order to which he or she belonged. The statue of the Blessed Virgin is often robed in Oriental dress and St. Joseph in the garb of a carpenter. —

Nor must we judge these southern races, these Mexican half-castes, Indians and those of Spanish descent, by our northern standards. They are an easy-going, courteous and most agreeable people, and if they lack the push and energy of northern races, we ought not to forget when criticizing them the enervating influence of a sub-tropical climate. Beyond question the Metropolitan Church of Mexico is a marvel of architectural art. Through it all one may notice the influence of the Saracen mind, which left its stamp on Iberian manners, Iberian art, and even on the Spanish language. Judging from the thickness of the walls and the massiveness of the building, the Spaniards built not alone for time, but also for eternity.

On my return from Bogotá to Mexico City I passed a day in the National Museum. Some departments of this great museum are unworthy of its reputation. What is known as the zoological hall contains exhibits so badly mounted that I am satisfied the taxidermist never graduated in his art nor saw living specimens of the animals on exhibition. So, too, in the "room of the ophidians"—snakes, serpents, cobras and pythons—the specimens are inferior and the setting and stuffing execrable. But once outside these departments criti-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

cism and fault-finding ought to end. The exhibits are well catalogued, and descriptive pamphlets are for sale at the hall of entrance at a reasonable price. Unfortunately the catalogues and labels are all in Spanish, and visitors from abroad who do not read the language miss much that is of great interest and historic value.

The curators, and their name is legion, are uniformed and of engaging appearance and address. They are not permitted to accept tips, and I think this prohibition applies to all government and city employés. The objects on exhibition in the departments of palæontology, mineralogy, botany, and zoology, are, with few exceptions, what may be seen in any museum in America and call for no particular notice here. The department of antiquities is the most notable in the world, a veritable treasure-house of pre-Columbian relics, and prehistoric finds. In one room of this department are exhibited examples of the famous Aztec picture writings, originals handed down from the days of the conquest; Aztec maps of Tenochtitlan, now the City of Mexico, and the war shield of Montezuma. Here also are genuine specimens of the war spears, bows and arrows, slings, battle-clubs, serrated swords of ebony, shields and poisoned spear-tips borne by the warriors of Montezuma. Carefully protected from the profanation of touch are preserved in glass cases copper and bronze implements, arrow-heads and spear-tips, chipped or carved out of diorite, basalt, quartzite or serpentine. These polished chips and flints are much superior in finish and work-

## CATHEDRAL AND MUSEUM OF MEXICO

manship to those handed down to us from the Iroquois and Hurons. The obsidian or volcanic glass spear-heads are toothed like a saw and tore ugly wounds in an enemy's body. In this room also is a fine display of ancient pottery, jewels, dresses and costumes of the aboriginal tribes, and cloth made by the early races from the fibre of heneguen, agave, and the maguey plants. Pieces of pottery show an even and transparent glaze, and after remaining for centuries underground still retain their fresh and brilliant colours.

Beautiful specimens of feather cloth, woven from extremely delicate tissues of cotton mixed with silky feathers and rabbits' fur, are among the wonders of the room. Gazing upon these relics of a departed race, I could not help regretting that from the wreck of this primitive civilization some of the arts essentially its own were not saved. For example, the methods by which its astronomers determined the length of the solar year, of working and polishing crystals, and cutting volcanic glass and manufacturing it into delicate articles of ornamental and economic value, of casting figures of gold and silver in one piece, of making filigree ornaments without soldering, of the wonderful pigments that defy the erosion of time and the corrosion of earth, and the triple weaving of fur, down, and cotton floss. Passing into the Memorial Hall, we are brought face to face with Cortez, an historic canvas by Laredo, to whom the conqueror repeatedly sat. The hall is hung with portraits in oil of the early apostolic

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

missionaries, the viceroys or Spanish governors of Mexico, from the days of the conquest to the era of independence. The proud and faded "banner of the conquest," the standard of black velvet, embroidered with gold and emblazoned with a red cross aureoled in blue and white, is here, supported on either side with trophies of victorious engagements. Like the Labarum of Constantine it carries victory in its motto, "Under this sign [the cross] we shall conquer." It was borne by the gallant Ensign Coral in the fierce battle with the Tlaxcalans, who, to the number of forty thousand, barred the road to Mexico. It was almost captured by the enemy on the night the Spaniards were driven from the Mexican capital, when Coral, fighting in the waters of the canal, cut his way to dry land, bearing the blazing cross once again to its friends. When Cortez recaptured the city, Coral planted it on the broad summit of the Temple of Sacrifice, the great Teocalli, where amid grinning idols were thrown the heads of the Spanish prisoners immolated on its bloody altars. In the same room with this historic standard are parts of the armour of Cortez, some of the weapons carried by his victorious troops, and the helmet and cuirass of the dauntless and impetuous Alvarado, who at the Tacuba causeway

"So valiantly kept the bridge  
In the brave days of old."

In the centre of this hall, conspicuously prominent, is the painting on silk of the "Virgin of Guadeloupe," the patroness of Mexico. This was the banner of

## CATHEDRAL AND MUSEUM OF MEXICO

the peasant army when the patriot priest, Hidalgo, led the volunteers to victory and struck the first blow for independence, when in October, 1810, he defeated the royal forces. Here are memorials of the republican generals and presidents of Mexico, portraits in oil of the unfortunate Maximilian and the fatalist, Napoleon III, and precious souvenirs of the Empress Carlotta, when, surrounded by an entourage of youth and beauty and princely birth, she reigned a queen in the royal palace of Chapultepec. In a lower room is the magnificent coach and carriage of state of Maximilian and his imperial consort. They are one and all painful reminders of the mutability and insecurity of high hopes, and that the "paths of glory lead but to the grave."

No city in the world, not even Madrid, may boast of any collection of the palæolithic and the neolithic periods, that is the ages of stone implements, chipped, ground or polished, as rich in the quantity, quality and variety of specimens as that in the Hall of Monoliths of the National Mexican Museum. Affrighted man recoils with horror from the presence of these dumb and ghastly witnesses of a cruel and merciless race. To the student of ethnology these monuments drip blood, the blood of innocent children, helpless women, and defeated men, immolated on these stones of sacrifice to the gods of the victorious Aztecs. Right in front of the arch of entrance is what is known as the "Calendar Stone," a huge monolithic disc weighing sixty thousand pounds. Archæologists have almost come to blows disputing

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the origin and import of the extraordinary carvings on the dial. How this stupendous mass was hewn from its basaltic bed without the aid of iron tools, and transported fifteen miles over land and water without draught animals is yet an unsolved problem. The astronomer Gama contends that the carvings on this colossal monolith prove that the Aztecs could count the hours of the day accurately, the periods of the soltices and of the equinoxes, and measure the transit of the sun across the zenith of Mexico. The stone idols, the repulsive and atrocious figures carved from porphyry and eruptive stone, the numerous serpent idols, coiled, feathered, and recumbent, are so loathsome and hideous as to convince one that the religion of the early Mexicans was one of fear and horror. The famous Palenque cross was brought here from Uxmal, Yucatan, and fills a conspicuous space in the museum. The Aztecs worshipped the cross as the God of Rain. There are many strangely shaped, stone emblems of the cross in this monolithic hall. But this Palenque cross and the one dug up at Mitla are marvels. Sculptured in high relief on a tablet nine feet by four, is a tall, well-proportioned man presenting with uplifted arms a child as an *ex voto* offering to the cross, the central figure of the tablet. Here also is the vase into which the heart torn from the human victim was thrown as a gift to the God of Death, after the offering to the sun. A volume, gruesome it is true, but of absorbing interest, might be written on the objects exposed in this fearful room.







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PLAZA AND CHURCH OF SANTO DOMINGO, MEXICO CITY

## CHAPTER XII

### RUINS OF MITLA—PYRAMID OF CHOLULA—IN MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

Son of the morning, rise, approach you here,  
Come, but molest not yon defenceless urn.  
Look on this spot, a nation's sepulchre,  
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.

—*Childe Harold.*

MEXICO is a land of ruins, and after centuries of occupation we are now only beginning to appreciate the achievements of its ancient people, and to understand the difficulty of solving the problem of its prehistoric settlement. On my return to Mexico City from Durango I left early one morning to examine the famous ruins of the Toltec town of Mitla. These wonderful buildings are near the junction of the Pachuca and Mexican Central lines to the Pacific coast, they are the despair of antiquarians, and antedate, in the opinion of Le Plongeon, the deluge.

I went out of my way a few miles to visit the giant tree of Tule, which stands in the churchyard of Santa Maria del Tule. This is one of the biggest trees in the world, not excepting those redwood giants of Calaveras, California. It is one hundred and ten feet high and six feet from the ground is one hundred and fifty-four feet in circumference. It is said that twenty-eight persons with their out-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

stretched arms touching finger tips can just encircle this immense tree, which is a species of extinct cypress. On the east side of the tree is a tablet placed there by Humboldt, the German traveller and antiquarian, when he visited Mitla in 1804. It has been there so long that the inscription is badly effaced, and I could not decipher it, even with the aid of a powerful glass. From the *hacienda* or farm of Don Felix Quero, where our party lunched, it is only five minutes' walk to the ruins. We passed through a straggling village of thatched huts and narrow streets hedged with giant cacti, across a little *rio* (stream), up a rocky hill, and we stood within the graven walls of a temple that may have existed before that of Solomon.

The ruins of Mitla, the wonder of the western world, are to-day just as they were in the days of Cortez. For centuries, it may be for thousands of years, through the long ages they have defied the ravages of time, of earthquakes and of tropical storms. No ruins in Mexico, and probably none in America, are more elaborately ornamented with chisel and painter's brush than these. To make their position and extent intelligible, I will have to separate them into groups or classes, for the architecture is not uniform. There are five collections of ruins. The first consists of immense blocks of porphyry and traces of hieroglyphic painting. The building is about one hundred and twenty-five feet by one hundred, and the walls, which are seventeen feet high, enclose a large court, on three sides of

## IN MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

which are ruins. There are four walled quadrangles facing upon an open court, lying exactly at the four points of the compass, with their walls in lines true to the needle. The outer walls of all the ruins are composed of oblong panels of mosaic, forming arabesques. I could trace no chiselling or sculpture on the walls, but, baffling description, were peculiar mosaics formed of pieces of coloured stone, cut and fitted into the face of the wall with mathematical accuracy and of complicated designs.

Passing from these buildings we enter the second group, which has three of its walls and chambers standing, under one of which is a subterranean vault decorated with mosaics and carvings of monstrous idols. In each of the chambers of this court there is a niche cased in cut stone in the wall opposite the entrance. When we leave here we enter the third group, which is in the best state of preservation, and where one of the buildings is intact without a solitary stone displaced. This is the Hall of Monoliths or stone columns, and is a splendid relic of prehistoric architecture. The lintels of this structure are immense blocks of porphyry, one of which is nineteen feet long, weighing perhaps twenty tons—a solid block of stone raised to its present position by some lost process of engineering.

But what distinguishes the ruins of Mitla from all other remains of Mexican architecture is six columns of porphyry, eight feet in circumference and fourteen feet high, ranged in line in the centre of the great hall. They have neither pedestal,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

capital, nor architrave, but are symmetrically rounded as if done by a lathe. They are said to be the only examples of the kind found in the ruined cities of Mexico or Central America. The next group of ruins is a building two hundred and eighty-four feet by one hundred and eight feet, with walls five or six feet thick. Two great stone pillars twelve feet high support the lintel of the doorway. A stone-covered passage leads into the audience chamber, a splendid room, with its walls in carved mosaics, or more properly a Grecian setting of the tiles. On the left is a beautiful room with scarcely a tile missing from its exquisitely inlaid walls. The tiles are so accurately cut and so deftly fitted that no mortar was used to hold them in place. In the covered hall are remains of the dark red paint on a hard cement plaster. In the centre of the court is a concrete pavement supporting an enclosed square with a cut stone border or curbing, intended for a fountain or flower bed.

In one apartment is a dado of painted figures on a dull red ground, perhaps the oldest mural painting in existence. No idols or statues have yet been found amid the ruins, and if such ever existed they were probably carried away when the city was deserted. Some of the houses are in a fine state of preservation and furnish examples of the skilful handiwork of the mechanics and artists of a buried and forgotten race. One thing is certain, the men who hewed from the quarries and carved these monoliths and huge lintels had no tempered tools of either iron or copper.

## IN MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

If they understood the tempering of copper the secret died with them. In the hewing of these immense pillars from the quarry, chipping and moulding them into their present form, in the lifting and setting them in their places, and the mixing of an imperishable cement, they gave proof of a mechanical civilization of a very high order. The walls and their weird carvings and mosaics remain, but they give no clue to the race who built the city of Mitla, or how it perished. As the splendid monoliths, standing or fallen, now are, so the Spaniards found them, and the description given four hundred years ago by Motolinia, who visited the ruins with Cortez, holds good, without the change of a word, to this day.

The Spanish historian states that in his day the Indians knew nothing of the people who built the city. Not one city alone, for all over this valley of Oaxaca are found the remains of walls, columns thrown down, and great monoliths like those of Mitla. Near Oaxaca are the remains of another prehistoric city, and the prostrate city of Xaga is only three miles from Mitla. The whole of the vast area south of the cities of Mexico and Puebla is strewn with the lithic remains of a civilization unknown to the Aztecs, and overgrown with forests in the days of the Spanish conquest. How were these huge shafts transported from the porphyry quarries ten miles away? To-day we understand how the Egyptian workmen split from its matrix and transported to Cairo the great Ptolemaic

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

monolith, but how did these prehistoric people of Mexico bring to Mitla these enormous stones and columns? They had no water to flood the quarry and raft them to a deep river as the Pharaohs did. They had no oxen, horses, or beasts of burden, for these were introduced by the Spaniards. Again, from whom did they learn architecture, with its plans, specifications, arabesques, grecques, and mosaics? And once again, from whom did they acquire the secret of extracting paints from minerals, paints that have survived the gnawing tooth of time and the vicissitudes of ages?

Leaving the famed city of Puebla in the early morning, we struck the trail almost due east across the plains to Los Arcos. Here we entered the Valle dos Templos, the valley of the churches, where on all sides minarets, towers and domes cut the sky line. As we advanced, the sun was rising above the mountain peaks, and on the tiled and polished domes of many hues shimmered gleams of burnished gold. From the only elevation in the valley—all that time and erosion had spared of a volcanic mount—we looked back upon the historic city of Puebla, the forts on its shadowing hills, and the picturesque villages that dotted the fertile plain. Near, almost unto contact, towered the volcanic mountain Popocatepetl (17,800 feet high), and Iztaccihuatl (16,700 feet)—the white woman,—whose imperial heads wear imperishable diadems of snow. To our left soared majestically the blue mountain of Orizaba, where the clouds love to rest,



## IN MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

and whose royal crest this early morning was aureoled in roseate glory.

Descending, we soon entered the venerable town of Cholula, a straggling but fascinating place of five thousand souls. In the north-east corner of the market square still stands the monastery built by the Franciscan friars in the days when Cortez, from the Indian village of Coyoacan, superintended the rebuilding of the city of Mexico. On the pillars supporting the galleries of this historic structure still remain, faintly outlined, the portraits of twelve of the early missionaries, including those of Fray Miquel and Juan Ossoria. In this town also is the church of San Gabriel, roofing Tolsa's famous altar, whose marvellous dome and delicately-chiselled pillarets of onyx attract artists from afar. Cholula in the days of old was called the Holy City. In pre-Columbian times its altars were annually dyed with the blood of human victims offered in sacrifice to the gods of Anahuac. The historian Herrera states that six thousand victims were yearly sacrificed in their sanguinary Teocalli or temples, and Bernal Diaz, soldier and chronicler of Cortez' march to Mexico, says he counted in a city taken by the Spaniards one hundred thousand skulls of human victims piled and ranged in methodical order. When Cortez, on his way from Vera Cruz to Mexico, fought and won his famous battle with the Tlaxcalans, a deputation of the caciques and prominent men of Cholula waited upon him and extended to him and his army the freedom and hospitality of

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

their city. Already a deep-laid plot was formed to entrap and slaughter the Spaniards; and to propitiate the favour of their gods, a great sacrifice, mostly of children, was offered up that morning in Cholula. Suspecting no treachery, Cortez, contrary to the advice of his Indian allies, accepted the invitation of the caciques, and when he and his men entered the city they were received with demonstrations of joy and welcome.

At this time Cholula was, after Mexico, the most flourishing and populous city of the New World. According to Torquemada, its walls enclosed a hundred and fifty thousand souls. It was famous for its gold and silver filigree fashioned into flowers, humming birds, and butterflies of such exquisite finish and accuracy of detail that when specimens were exhibited in Toledo the Spanish metallurgists admitted they were equal to anything of the kind done in Europe. The Spaniards visited the great market, and were astounded to see the exhibit of delicately fashioned pottery, shawls, and rugs of brilliant colours woven from the maguey and agave fibre, and the unheard of and wonderful feather cloth. It was in this city the mysterious white man—deified as Quetzalcoatl—the god of rain—dwelt in the remote past, and taught the Cholulans the higher virtues and material civilization. Here, too, he foretold the coming of a bearded race of men from beyond the sea. In the days of the conquest there was a tradition that in his honour the temple on the summit of the great pyramid of Cholula was raised.

## IN MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

For two nights the city was illuminated to do honour to its guest, and to disarm suspicion presents were exchanged, fêtes held, and banquets given. Hidden in the forest a few miles north of the city were twenty thousand of Montezuma's warriors sent from Mexico to assist the Cholulans in the annihilation of the Spaniards. Cortez, through his female interpreter, Marina, learned of the murderous conspiracy. Satisfying himself by further enquiries of the base treachery of his hosts, he invited the caciques and principal men to meet him. After accusing them of shameful treachery to their guests, he charged them with conspiracy to murder him and his men, and when they denied the accusation he produced his proofs and his witnesses. The Cholulans were silent and confused, and before they had time to frame a reply Cortez gave the signal to his men, who fell upon them, slaughtering, according to Oviedo, three thousand of the citizens, sparing, however, women and children.

Here, in this historic and venerable city, we bivouacked for the night, and the next morning began the ascent of the pyramid, the most colossal monument of the two Americas, and in some respects of the world. A substantial, paved road built by the Spaniards winds around the mysterious structure, and makes the ascent comparatively easy. When we arrived at the top of the pyramid we stood upon a plateau or stone platform two hundred feet long by one hundred and forty-four feet wide. We were one hundred and eighty feet—the height

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

of the pyramid—above ground level, so that if the builders had continued their work they would have reached an altitude of four hundred and ten feet. The French antiquarian, Le Plongeon, and the American cryptogamist, Donnelly, believed this pyramid to be the original Tower of Babel. The Spanish historian of the conquest records that in his day there was a tradition among the Aztecs that it was built by giants, who intended to raise the mount to the sky, but the gods, laughing at their arrogance, rained fire from heaven, and forced them to desist. To give the readers an adequate idea of this tremendous structure, I will dispense with the figures of the civil engineers who have lately measured it and illustrate the size of the pyramid by familiar comparisons. Assuming the area enclosed by Queen Street (Toronto) on the north, King Street on the south, Yonge and Bay Streets east and west, to be thirty acres, it will give the base of the monument. Now, if all the earth dug from the Welland Canal, which, I think is twenty-six and one-half miles long and fourteen feet deep, was piled in a thirty-acre field, the pile would not equal the height and bulk of this colossal structure. Humboldt is credited with having stated, when in Mexico, that this pyramid represents the labour of five thousand men working twelve hours a day for thirty years. The materials entering into the construction of this stupendous work are broken limestone, boulder, rubble, eruptive stone and sun-dried brick, held in place by a binding of unknown composition. On the summit where

## IN MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

now is the beautiful church of "Our Lady of Good Help," stood the Aztec temple of "The God of Rain," on whose altars were sacrificed prisoners and slaves, victims of propitiation to the Ebon god whose statue was crowned with plumes of fire, and around the neck of which was a collar of gold and precious stones.

Of the age of the Cholula pyramid no man may speak with authority. It has defied the applied and accumulative research of antiquarians and archæologists, and will remain for all time an insoluble problem. It was hoary with age when the Aztec migrants entered the valley of Anahuac in the thirteenth century, and was lost in the twilight of the past when the Castilians gazed upon it with awe and bewilderment. It may antedate the siege of Troy or indeed, the Egyptian Cheops. When Manasseh was offering human sacrifices in Jerusalem, and the smoke of the perpetual fire was mingling with the perfumed incense in the sanctuary of the Holy of Holies, perhaps on this Teocalli of Cholula the pagan priests were holding aloft to the sun the palpitating hearts torn from the breasts of their human victims, replenishing the ever-burning oil on the altar and swinging blazing censers before the graven image of Choc-Mool. There is no agreement of opinion among the Spanish, French and Mexican writers on the monuments of Central America and Mexico as to its origin and purpose. Here it is, however, defying the gnawing tooth of time and the shock of earthquakes, and for all we

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

know is destined to last till the “sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon becomes as blood and time shall be no more.”

The view from the summit was superb. Around the fair valley, teeming with fertility and dotted with happy villages, rose the great barrier of porphyritic rock, the Sierra Madre guarding the enchanted region. As we descended the sun was dipping to the west, and the shadow of the wondrous pyramid was creeping over Cholula and wrapping the ancient village in sunless light.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BULL FIGHT IN MEXICO CITY

So long as prize fighting, stage exhibitions of assassination, live pigeon shooting and fox hunting are permitted in England and America, the Anglo-Saxon race cannot with logic or consistency, charge us with brutality in the bull ring.

—*Emile Castelar.*

THE bull ring and bull fights in Spain and Mexico are survivals of the Flavian amphitheatre, the ancient Roman circus maximus, and the gladiatorial games. In the days of the heathen, men were butchered to make a Roman holiday, but in Mexico bulls and horses are substituted for men, and slaughtered amid the *vivas* of cheering multitudes. Still, the people who boil living lobsters, skin eels alive, encourage prize fighting, and with hounds and horses chase a poor fox to death cannot afford to throw stones at the Mexicans.

The Romita Plaza, at which all the fights now take place, is a new ring, built in 1899. It is reached by electric cars, marked "Toros" (bulls), and the fare is ten cents. The building is an immense amphitheatre of wood, and seats eighteen thousand, the benches rising in tiers from the ring walls. The arena, or ring proper, is one hundred and fifty feet in diameter. There is no roof or awning to the building, and in the afternoon, when all fights are "pulled off," the sun throws a shadow over one-half the interior of the structure. There is quite a

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

difference in the price of seats in the sun and shadow. The general admission for the sunny side is a dollar and a half, and the shady side four dollars.

As one approaches the plaza on the occasion of a big fight, the noise is almost deafening. All manner and variety of carriages and automobiles drive up and unload their occupants; street cars are packed, riders dressed in *charro* costume mounted on mettlesome bronchos, stable their mounts and lounge around till the bugle sounds. Thousands come afoot, and hundreds of boys hang around the grounds, just as they do at home when the circus comes to town.

An hour before the performance the great building begins to fill up. First, two companies of soldiers, with fixed bayonets and a businesslike appearance, enter and take up positions. They are here to keep the hoodlum element in order. In addition there are twenty or thirty policemen to prevent any disorder or disapproval of the fights, manifested in the past by throwing seats, planks, or empty bottles into the ring. As the building fills up, the crowd gets impatient, and yells out of pure exuberance of feeling.

The fight commences promptly at the hour advertised, and continues from two to three hours, when from three to seven bulls are killed. They are fierce animals of the old Andalusian stock, raised especially for the ring.

A few minutes before the performance begins the



## THE BULL FIGHT IN MEXICO CITY

director of the sport arrives, and with his friends takes his seat in the box exclusively reserved for his use. He is generally one of the city aldermen, and his duty is to see that the municipal regulations governing bull fighting are observed. When the director is seated a bugle is sounded, the gate barring the entrance to the fighters' quarters flies open, and a gaily dressed horseman rides in. He is the *alguazil* or master of the arena. Superbly mounted, he rides straight for the director's box, removes his plumed hat, and with a gracious bow asks permission for the performance to open. The key of the corral where the bulls are housed is tossed to him, and horse and rider back out of the arena. Then the band strikes up the "Bull Fighters' March" from "Carmen," and the actors file into the ring.

The *alguazil* on his richly caparisoned horse, leads the parade, followed by the stars of the company, the matadores, resplendent in their costumes of silk and satin, gold and velvet, wearing flowing capes of Lyonnaise silk, costing anywhere from two to five hundred dollars. These are the real bull fighters, the stars of the aggregation, and are all Spaniards, or of Spanish descent. Behind them, in brilliant costumes, proudly march the *banderilleros* or arrow men, followed by the *capadores* and *pica-dores*, astride of poor, mangy, broken-down hacks. The gaudily harnessed mules, three abreast, which drag out the dead bulls and gored horses, close the cavalcade.

When the procession has made the circuit of the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

arena, the actors in a body salute the director, then take their positions. Suddenly, high over the shouts of the multitude is heard the blast of a bugle, the gate of the bull pen is raised, and the proud beast springs into the ring. He wears the colours of Piedras Negras, the *hacienda* or ranch on which he was trained for the ring. When the bull dashes into the arena, he is greeted with deafening cheers. For a moment he is dazed, the unaccustomed surroundings, the music of the band, the hurrahs of the excited spectators, root him to the ground. He pauses, looks around, bewildered, then bellows defiance to the crowd, and challenges the ring to combat.

Suddenly one of the *capadores* advances boldly to meet him, tauntingly waving a purple cape, the bull with lowered head and horns leaps for the flag, and the fight is on. The *capadore* retires, and the *picadore* or man on horseback, advances. He rides straight for the bull and invites his charge. He is armed with a long lance-pointed staff to protect himself and his mount from the bull's horns, but often the poor horse is disemboweled and rider and horse rolled in the sand.

The next act is a most graceful and daring spectacle. A *banderillero* advances to the bull, holding in each hand a tinsel-wrapped stick less than a yard long, and steel barbed. When the bull charges, the man sidesteps and plunges into the rushing animal the barbed sticks. The barbs are not thrown; they are driven in just above the shoulder-blades, and if

## THE BULL FIGHT IN MEXICO CITY

one barb is misplaced the actor is hissed and jeered by the gallery. When the performer plunges his darts, he retires, another repeats the act, and again another till six gaily-decorated barbs are fastened in the flesh.

By this time the bull is worked up to the highest pitch of excitement and madness. He paws the earth, and bellows in his anger, and his rage is fearful to look upon. At this stage the matadore or star fighter leaves his position, and, alone, walks straight up to him. He carries a crimson flag, and is armed with a two-edged sword, keen as a razor. The silence is intense, for this act is the most dangerous and dramatic of the whole performance. Man and bull, eye to eye, stand motionless; the man, wary, watchful, and with every nerve and muscle strung to concert pitch, the bull wild with rage, but slow to move, instinctively conscious that the fight is now to the death.

The matadore moves forward, the beast breaks ground, and the fighter tauntingly waves the red flag in his face. Then the bull rushes upon him, but the man, with marvellous agility, steps aside, out of harm's way. This act the matadore repeats four or five times, and when the beast makes his final charge, the man springs into the air and buries his sword to the hilt between the shoulder-blades. If the stroke is driven true the bull drops to his knees, blood pours from mouth and nostrils, he rises, falls again, struggles once more to stand, rolls over on his side and is dead.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

Half the spectators rise to their feet, cheer, and with hurrahs greet the matadore, and for the moment he is a greater hero than President Diaz. Cigars, money, bottles of *tequilla*, hats, and canes are flung into the ring. The bull is drawn out by the mules, the ring raked, the blood pools dusted with sand, and the first act of the tragic play is over.

At this "*gran corrida extraordinaria*" there were fully ten thousand spectators, and among them one-fourth were foreigners. People at home denounce the bull fights, but I regret to say that when in Mexico they are among the first to secure reserved seats. I am satisfied the bull suffers little real pain, he is too excited and enraged to feel his wounds, and when the "*golpe de gracia*"—the blow of mercy—is struck, the bull drops as in a slaughter-house. But the poor horses are sometimes gored to death, and this is the most brutal feature of the fight. These Spanish bull fighters are well paid. Mazantini, on his last trip to Mexico, carried away more than fifty thousand dollars as the result of his few months' performances.

I went to the amphitheatre not with any hope of enjoying the spectacle, but rather to study the bearing and conduct of an emotional race under great excitement. Here also was given to me the opportunity of seeing the Mexican people: the city "tough," the gamins, the bronzed and melancholy Aztec, the Mexican gambler and *pulque* man, the branders and cowboys in leather suits, wearing long dark hair and wide sombreros, the *filles-de-*

## THE BULL FIGHT IN MEXICO CITY

*couleur*, the *sang-mêlé*—all of them were to be seen here mingling with the sons and daughters of the rich and fashionable aristocrats of the city. Sitting that hot afternoon in this Mexican rotunda I was able to form a faint opinion of the paroxysms of emotional insanity which possessed the Romans in the days of the Caesars, when “*Panes et circinces*”—plenty to eat and a good time—was the cry of the multitude. The church has for many years denounced these bull fights, but while the state tolerates them, the church can influence those only who listen to her voice.







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THE CITY OF PANAMA, CAPITAL OF THE NEW REPUBLIC AND ITS HARBOUR, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST  
OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN



## CHAPTER XIV

### PANAMA—FEVER-HAUNTED ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD

Like stout Cortez when with eagle eye  
He stared at the Pacific; and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surprise,  
Silent upon a peak in Darien.

—*Keats.*

ACCORDING to tradition, von Moltke was aroused from a sound sleep in the middle of the night to be told that France had declared war on Germany. "In the right hand top drawer of the middle cabinet," the great strategist remarked, as he turned over and finished his sleep, and his informant went to the place indicated and found all the plans for the invasion of France. When Secretary Hay was told that the revolution had broken out in Panama, all he did was to go to the proper cabinet and draw out the portfolio labelled "Panama" and tell his subordinates to read carefully and follow instructions. I have no sympathy for Colombia. The clique at Bogotá, the capital of the state, who controlled affairs, were out for "graft," to make all they could out of the canal concessions. Colombia in the game held the winning hand, but Uncle Sam, covering the lady with a six-shooter, cleaned the table, and that's the whole case in a nutshell.

The morning I arrived in Panama the temperature was that of a forcing-house, 93° in the shade.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

Built on a low-lying neck of land, baked on the surface during the dry season by a sun whose vertical rays are scorching beams of heat, and deluged in the rainy season by downfalls of torrid liquid, Panama is the most unattractive city I have ever entered. The streets are narrow and unclean, lined with small houses made of infinitely light material, built for a mockery of coolness and shade, and about them, over them, and around them everywhere are growing banks of green, the most verdant, dense and rank green the eye ever beheld. Of sanitary arrangements there seemed to be none. Dirt of every kind lies about freely, to be swept away or left to putrify as fate may direct. The town has between twenty-five and thirty thousand people, and is never free from pestilence or plague of some kind. It is shunned by cooling breezes and its atmosphere is charged with the dense, overpowering vapour of tropical vegetation. Thousands of people, men and women, are moping about from morning till night, drinking, dying, always drinking and dying, and there seems to be no help for it.

In the days of old it was famous for wealth and was sacked by Morgan, the buccaneer, and by Daniels, the pirate, and in those days was an asylum for cut-throats, freebooters, pirates, and black, brown and white criminals who fled here for a safe anchorage. Panama City, from its earliest settlement, has been, and is, the dark and noise-some sepulchre of all ambition and heroism, the Nemesis of De Lesseps, and its canal will be the

## ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD

toughest, roughest, and rankest proposition ever undertaken by the Washington government since the Civil War. The houses and gardens of the better class are to the north of the city. Here the streets are broader and are planted with trees for shade, each house having a garden of its own with palms and creepers and a profusion of tropical flowers. Many of them are cool, airy habitations with open doors and windows, overhanging porticos and rooms into which a stray breeze may enter, but no sun. The lawns are planted in mangoes, oranges, papaws, and bread-fruit-trees, strange to look at, but luxuriantly shady. The borders of one of these lawns was blazing with varieties of the single hibiscus, crimson, pink and fawn colour, the largest I had ever seen.

I came overland from Colon on the Atlantic to this city by the Panama railroad. The iron road bridging the isthmus is forty-seven miles in length, with twenty-four stations and signal platforms. The fare for the forty-seven miles is ten dollars, and an excess of forty pounds of baggage is paid for at the rate of ten cents a pound. The Panama road is a bonanza, and its shares are so valuable that they are not listed on the market.

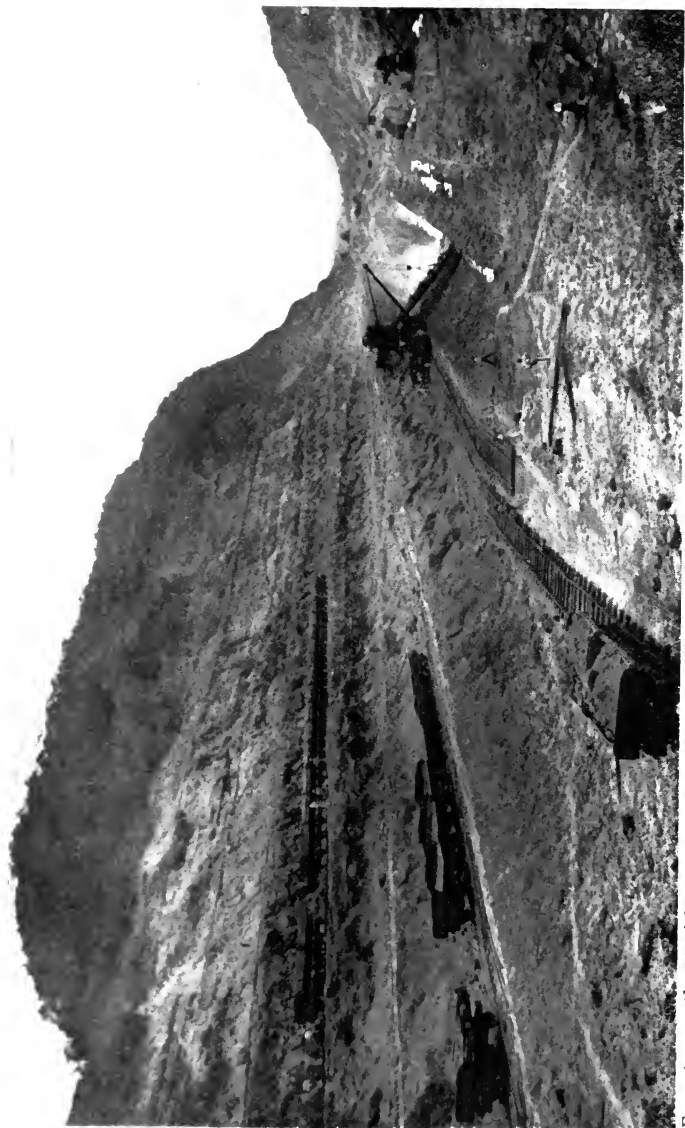
At Panama the company has constructed a huge dock, which, with its warehouses, cost three hundred thousand dollars. The road was begun in 1851, and it is a common saying in this city and Colon that for every sleeper or tie on the road a human life was sacrificed. This, no doubt, is an exagger-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

ation, but one thing is certain, the company never published a list of the number who perished in the construction of the road. The Irish labourers, more exposed by reason of their exuberance of spirit and the richness of their blood, were almost exterminated, till the agents of the company at New York and New Orleans refused to forward Irish or Scottish labourers to the isthmus. Then negroes were imported in thousands from the West Indies, but though immune to yellow fever, they fell victims to the putrid water and the blazing sun. Then Chinese coolies were tried, and they died as fish die out of water. Many of them committed suicide, others died in paroxysms of chagres fever, and the rest, frightened, broken in spirit, and discouraged, returned home. The line of the railway, and Panama in particular, is a huge cemetery.

This city is teeming with weird romance. Here the pirates sold their plunder, exacted tribute, fought desperate duels and squandered the robber gains in riot and gambling. I passed over the *plazuela* where Johnny-crows picked the pirates' bones, and where to-day little children with chocolate-coloured faces and dark brown eyes stare timidly and curiously at the blue-eyed and fair-haired intruder from beyond the sea. To all young Canadians who may be tempted by alluring promises to come here when the Americans begin work on the canal, I say, stay away; but if you must come, engage in the best business the place affords—start a coffin factory,





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WHERE SHIPS WILL PASS THROUGH A MOUNTAIN. THE FAMOUS CULEBRA CUT, FINISHED DEPTH  
330 FEET (S.E.), PANAMA CANAL

## ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD

and with your first order have one made to your own measure.

Before I came to Panama I thought all work had long ago stopped on the canal, but I am told that up to the day of Panama's Declaration of Independence about fifteen hundred negroes were shovelling, digging, and wheeling on the great contract. To keep alive its charter the company was expected to expend at least forty-five thousand dollars monthly in prosecuting the works. From ocean to ocean as the crow flies is twenty-nine miles. When completed the canal will be about fifty miles in length, or twenty-four miles longer than our Welland. The three greatest obstacles in the building of the waterway are the Culebra (snake) Mountain, three hundred feet high, the control of the Chagres River, and the climate. The canal is more than half cut through. There is a trench one hundred and sixty feet deep already through the Culebra saddle, and only one hundred and ninety feet remain to be dug.

For a time this mountain offered an almost insurmountable difficulty. For sixty feet from the surface the cut was composed of soft, spongy, sliding soil, and the enormous mass to be removed called for machinery of great power and weight, which sank into the yielding earth. Another and seeming insurmountable obstacle was and is the control of the waters of the Chagres River. To turn into the Pacific the course of this river, which flows from the Andes to the Atlantic, or to build

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

a huge earth dam at Bohio across the river and turn its waters westward, is a problem the American engineers will have to solve.

When finished, the distance from Liverpool to Yokohama will be shortened by four thousand miles. Thirty-six miles are now dug to a depth of twenty-eight feet. When this wonderful enterprise was begun by M. De Lesseps twenty years ago, it was calculated to a mathematical certainty that one hundred and fifty millions of dollars would complete the work.

This mathematical certainty, supported by the prestige of and admiration for the great engineer of the Suez Canal, tempted the thrifty French peasantry to pour their savings into De Lesseps' lottery-box and keep on pouring till the bubble burst, entailing ruin upon thousands and driving hundreds to suicide. Nor was M. De Lesseps far afield in his estimates. American engineers who are here looking over the ground tell me that the prodigality, unbounded extravagance and waste of material ate up more than the canal itself. In those days forty thousand men were employed on the works, and money flowed as water in a mining camp.

Speaking of the prodigality of the officials, Albert G. Smith, formerly one of the section "bosses," now living in Mexico, said to me that nothing could exceed the extravagance of the official class, and that the richest firm on earth would have gone bankrupt under similar conditions. One instance which goes



## ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD

to show the recklessness of these men was when Ferdinand De Lesseps expressed his intention of visiting the isthmus. Immediately the commissioners of the canal company began the erection of a \$195,000 dwelling, which was completed and ready to receive the distinguished engineer upon his arrival. He remained but a few weeks, and his term of occupancy on the occasion of both visits did not exceed a month. The building has been vacant ever since, and stands near the abandoned machinery that was ordered to be dumped from the ship into the sea, because some official had been interrupted at dinner by the importunities of the captain who, having been in the harbour some days, wished to clear port.

In these few eventful years there was not grouped on any place on earth so much foul disease, such a hideous manure heap of moral and physical abomination as was then concentrated on this isthmus. Adventurers, card sharpers, keepers of dives, bunco men and fallen women all swarmed to Panama as vultures swoop upon carrion. Every one gambled, and many in sheer desperation took their lives when brooding over their losses at the gaming table. One instance in particular was that of a young man, who after saving up some fifteen thousand dollars, had decided to return to New York City, his birth-place, and build for his mother and only sister a home that would keep them comfortable for the rest of their days. The evening before sailing he took a stroll through the gambling section of the town. He

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

watched the play of some of his friends and then, jocularly remarking that he would win his passage home, he placed a bet on the cloth. At midnight he was a beggar. Saying nothing to any one he deliberately left the room and placing a pistol to his head blew out his brains. The incident was most pathetic, and caused a deep impression at the time. The population of the state of Panama is about three hundred thousand, and is composed of various elements, Spanish, Indian, negro, mulatto, and a limited number from European countries and the United States engaged in commerce.

Colon, or Aspinwall, as it is sometimes called, has a population of about thirty-five hundred, and has one of the best hotels on the isthmus. In company with one of the canal officials I visited the works at Colon and drove four or five miles along the banks of the waterway. In the early days of the digging, owing to the awful heat and frequent rains, men died so fast that it was impossible to keep track of their deaths. The canal company and the railway company had separate hospitals at Colon and Panama, and the capacity of each was taxed all the time. The railway company had a morgue in Aspinwall, and white men were stored in its vaults ten deep awaiting burial. Men soon lost all fear of death, and despite the warnings of physicians, would carouse nightly and inhale the deadly vapours which exuded from the earth, to fall victims next day to the chagres and yellow fevers.

The canal from the Atlantic side goes through

## ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD

a tropical jungle and through earth feculent for unnumbered ages with parasitical and vegetable decay. It is the abode of the deadly chagres fever, typhus, dysentery and yellow fever. Here snakes abound, and mosquitoes, scorpions and centipedes make existence for the white man almost intolerable. Half buried in the rank earth lie costly machinery, dredges, pneumatic drills and steam shovels, which were found unsuited to the work and cast aside as so much scrap iron. Here came thousands of the loose negro population of the West Indies, tempted by the alluring bait of a dollar or two dollars a day. Half of them are buried along the banks of the canal; the other half returned home with enough money to buy a few acres of banana land and close out their lives in comfort and indolence.

Here, too, lie mouldering the skeletons of French engineers, sub-contractors, clerks and petty officials, who left La Belle France with glorious expectations, the promise of big pay, and the hope of rapid promotion. What killed them? The climate? No, the same monster that killed hundreds when Hamilton Merritt, away back in the thirties, was digging the Welland Canal. Then it was the "fever and ague" produced by foul water and air tainted by the exhalations arising from the low ground and marshes through which the lines were run. But the monster of Panama is merciless in his cruelty and rarely spares a white man. If you place but an atom of the earth that is taken from a foot below the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

surface under a microscope, it will palpitate with life, but it is life which means death to you.

From the disturbed soil there rises a warm vapour charged with deadly bacteria which play havoc with the strongest constitutions. This mephitic mist is the hideous wraith of the canal monster, the horrible, impalpable thing that haunts swamps and marshes and is in the earth omnipresent. Only those who have followed an Indian trail through a tropical forest where perpetual twilight reigns and damp heat prevails, have any idea of the rapid and rank vegetation of equatorial lands. It is a vegetation of matted and gigantic vines, of fleshy plants and strange trees festooned with lianas and monster creepers where insects riot, and the air is oppressive with the odour of diurnal flowers. Among these forest plants and vines the struggle for possession of the soil never ends. Even the monster trees are sometimes strangled in the grip of the tough and matted bush-rope that coils around, cuts through the bark, and saps the life out of them.

I have seen this fibrous parasite, nearly as thick as a man's body, twisted like a corkscrew around a monarch of the forest, and rearing its head high above the topmost branches. With us in Canada nearly all trees and plants are anemophilous, but here they are fertilized by insect agency. As a result the woods, marshes and swamps swarm with life, night and day. In the forest every plant is a perennial, and as no sunlight ever enters, the air is soggy and the vegetation steaming and rank. More

## ISTHMUS OF THE DEAD

than that, there are herbaceous trees, rich in pith, which, unlike the forest trees that grow by concentric rings, require no other conditions for their life than prevail here—a warm soil, great humidity, and an atmosphere saturated with carbonic acid gas. In this sunless heat every noxious plant and tree luxuriates. Make a few yards clearing this morning and to-morrow some new and nameless growth, with snake-like appearance, is twisting, twining and coiling, as if alive, searching for food or support.

When death comes, and death is as rapid as life in this isthmus, the decay fills the air with poisonous exhalations. This rank vegetation and insect life eternally growing and decaying for thousands of years have superimposed upon the primitive earth layer upon layer of dank mould, where myriads of deadly germs swarm, where noxious gases are germinated, and within which death in its most hideous aspects lingers. How Balboa, the discoverer of the Pacific, ever cut his way through this matted forest and carried his ships in sections over the isthmus is, to this day, an almost incredible mystery.

It is now known to many that correspondents are paid by some one to minimize the dangers of the climate and the isthmus, and to deny facts stated by disinterested writers. The government of the United States must get men to dig the canal. The Chinese coolies cannot stand the wear and tear of the work and the climate, the negroes are too indolent to work under a broiling sun or torrential rains,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

Japan will not permit her sons to leave for Panama, so what is there left but white labour from Europe or America? Thus some one pays to hide the truth about the isthmus. Malaria, smallpox, black measles, the chagres and yellow fevers provide the bodies for the "death train," that runs from Colon many times a day to the cemetery at Monkey Hill, where graves are always open. For miles and miles along the route of the waterway lie festering swamps filled with sedge and weeds, and infested with snakes and alligators. The canal, like a huge python, winds through swamps seething in decay and round hills covered with tropical vegetation. It is a python that has swallowed in one year—1888—forty thousand bodies of men and is every day devouring fresh victims. For more than two years the United States government has accomplished little save to experiment with the various races of men to find out what nationality can best bear the fearful hardships. In Panama City during the day the thermometer registers from 85° to 96° and the humidity is so great that rust and mildew form on everything not in daily use. Hundreds of great black vultures hover over the city, or sit on the housetops in gloomy funereal rows. They fatten on offal and garbage, on dead animals, and often on the putrefying bodies of men who stray away in delirium and die in the woods. Once more let me say Panama is no place for a white man.

## CHAPTER XV

### A MYSTERIOUS LAND

And over all there was the shadow of a fear,  
A sense of mystery the spirit haunted;  
Which told as plain as whisper in the ear—  
This place is haunted.

—Hood.

THERE is no part of the two Americas more romantic or weirdly attractive than Yucatan. It is a land of ghosts, of mystery, of colossal ruins, a land of a perished civilization, of indecipherable hieroglyphics, and of hoary antiquity. Here, in the remote past, an unknown race built basilicas to the sun and temples to the serpent and cross, coiling the hideous snake around what is to us the symbol of redemption. From Palenque, the city of the dead, to Tabasco, and on to Chichen Itza, in the gloomy forests of Guatemala, lie in almost unbroken continuity sixty miles of imperishable ruins. Here, buried among exuberant timber lands of lignum-vitæ and mahogany, there, in the jungles of rank vegetation, are artificially terraced mounds of great height, solitary remains of shrines, temples, palaces and pyramids of an architecturally great people, who left us no records beyond these immense structures and the unsolved writings on their huge stones. Partially covered by tropical vines and the mould of ages, these giant buildings remain as mortuary

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

memorials of a race whose origin baffles all ethnological research, and whose disappearance is an historical mystery. Some of these groups of ruins have a circumference of more than four miles. At Chichen Itza there is a temple of granite, its façade a mass of intricate carvings, perched high upon a terraced mound of composite material. Along each front of this wonderful mound extends the writhing body of a monster serpent, carved out of blocks of stone. High upon the granite platform of the temple rests the tail of the huge snake, while the gigantic head, with jaws wide open and forked tongue, lies menacingly on the plain at the base of the mound. The traces of artificially-built roads, raised two or more feet above the level and surfaced with hard, smooth cement, show that these roads extended from temple to terrace, and from the mound to other populous centres. At Toluca, in Guatemala, a subterranean, stone aqueduct of great solidity and durability passes under one of the great buildings.

Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, when contending with starvation, and against the elemental forces of nature on his march to Honduras, passed with his troops within thirty miles of the ruins of the prehistoric cities of Palencia, but he heard nothing of them. The little village of Tres Cruces—the three crosses—is built on the ground where three crosses were lifted up by Cortez in honour of the Holy Trinity, when he camped there two days to refresh his command. Even then, these magnificent structures, buried in a wilderness of tropical



## A MYSTERIOUS LAND

vegetation, were, as they are to-day, melancholy monuments in a desolation of solitude. Nothing was known of these silent cities by civilized man until 1750, and they were not even visited or explored till 1774. Then came the distinguished traveller, Calderon, to be followed by Le Plongeon, Dupaix and Desiré Charnay, Stephens and Catherwood. When Calderon visited Yucatan he partially explored the great forests and inspected eighteen palaces, twenty-two great buildings and one hundred and sixty-eight stone houses. All works of barbaric art found in the ruined cities are fortunately preserved in the museums of Mexico, Mérida, Paris or Madrid. Among these *finos* were soft glazed earthenware, curiously shaped marble vases, fragments of statuary, and strangely fantastic and even hideously ugly specimens of obsidian carvings.

But to the archæologist and student of ethnology the most extraordinary objects found among these ruins were two bronze medals. One of these represents a man kneeling on a rock between two monster fishes with open mouths, surrounded by water, out of which the tops of trees are visible. The other medal presents a tree bearing fruit, around which a serpent is coiled. The antiquarians of Mexico believe the impressions on these medals perpetuate the tradition of the Noachic deluge and the temptation in the Garden of Eden. How the stamping or cutting of bronze was done, and when the Mayas first discovered the fusion of metals, are unsolved problems. Copper chisels and axes were

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

found among huge and half-finished blocks of granite, and among fragments of pillars and architraves. They used copper with an alloy of tin, chisels of the volcanic nephrite stone, and a silicious sand to cut the hardest blocks, some of them of great dimensions. In the Temple of the Cross were found three large mural tablets, and on each in low relief, an exact carving of the Roman cross. One of these is now in the Smithsonian Institute, Washington; the other two are in the National Museum, Mexico. That in the lithic hall of Mexico has the Royal Quetzal bird, now extinct, perched on the upright. The tablet shows a man offering a child *ex voto* to the cross, and bears the Maya hieroglyphics. These Palenque letterings display considerable skill in the chiselling and an advanced stage in the hieroglyphic art. They are probably phonetic and symbolic in their character. That their mysterious import will ever be deciphered is doubtful, for the race and language are dead.

It is impossible to contemplate these mysterious monuments without experiencing curiosity to know something of the race that built them. The cities may have been very populous, for the poor lived then, as now, in houses of cane and wood. A broad, mandible-digging ant, called by the natives *cay*, infests the forests and jungles of Yucatan and Guatemala in such swarms that in a week they will turn a level plain into numberless cellular hillocks, often several feet high, leaving the diminutive mounds so honeycombed that a careless traveller

## A MYSTERIOUS LAND

will sometimes sink up to his knees in the loosened earth. These ants destroy all post-holes and marks of posts, so that it is impossible to trace the limits of the ancient Maya towns. What was perishable disappeared long ago, and only the adamantine temples and palaces remain. Yet from the mural paintings still traceable, from the abundant material found in excavating, from the remains of their statuary and stone engravings, we may learn something of these mysterious people.

Palæontologists claim to be able from a single fossil bone to reconstruct the complete skeleton, and the archæologist, unwilling to admit his neighbour's superiority, contends he can resurrect a race with its mental and physical attributes from the ruins of its buried cities. Be that as it may, there are in the Mexican National Museum drawings and automata of the ancient people and warriors of Yucatan. One of these, a valiant chief leading his warriors into battle, is photographed on my memory. His war bonnet is a coronet fashioned from the rare and beautiful plumes of the cacique bird. Pendant from the lobes of his ears are rings set with the precious green jade-stone. Armlets and bracelets of silver gleam on his naked arms. A richly wrought *uit* or breech-cloth girds his loins, and his limbs are protected with coloured and elaborately worked leggings. Two thonged *hueratics* or sandals serve him for shoes, while in his terrible right hand he poises his serrated lance tipped with obsidian or flint. On his left arm is fastened his shield, painted with

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

heraldic devices. Over his head wave the battle pennon of Yucatan and the oriflamme of his tribe.

I know not if this Mexican drawing resurrects the dead, or is an apparition of the artist, but one thing at least is certain, men and women have lived and their hearts have throbbed in days "outside of history," in this mysterious land. Everywhere are the tidal remains of an ancient humanity, which overflowed from its primal springs in the East and rolled in upon these shores, till then, unprofaned by human touch. These sons of Shem brought with them civilization, but when the offspring of Japheth found their habitat they were descending to savagery. Here, as with the savage tribes of the north, the evil element in our human nature was conquering the mental and the moral man, and revenge found its consolation in the atrocious cruelty it inflicted on the conquered and the weak. When the victorious enemy cut off the fingers and toes of Adonibezec, the wretched man rejoiced that in his time "seventy chiefs having their fingers and toes cut off gathered up the leavings of meat under my table." The story of this prehistoric race and its recession is war, tribal divisions, and a superstition tending to hardness of heart and contempt for human life. After all, the only real enemy of man has been man. Yucatan is now the subject of luminous research, and in the shifting diorama of archæological and historical discussion, some fragments of additional information may help to solve the origin of the Mayas.

## CHAPTER XVI

### YUCATAN AND CHIAPAS—LAND OF GHOSTS

The spirit moveth there no more,  
The dwellers of the hills are gone,  
The sacred graves are trampled o'er  
And foot-prints mar the altar stone.

—Whittier.

PLATO says that to improve by travel a man should begin his journey when he is between fifty and sixty. The sole object in going abroad, in Plato's opinion, is to meet and converse with *theioiandres*, inspired men who are found here and there in all lands. As I was within the Greek sage's limitation I decided that before the "clear call for me" came to cross the bar I would see some of the wonderful works of God, and of the noblest of His creatures, man. In my college days I had read of the marvellous remains of ancient cities hidden away in the wondrous forests of Central America, and now that I have seen them they remain with me as spectres with De Quincey, the opium eater, when he awoke from his dreams.

The morning I left Vera Cruz for Yucatan was intensely hot. The sun was a blazing furnace whose vertical rays melted the pitch in the planking of the steamer's deck. Two hours from the city we ran into a tropical storm, a frequent occurrence in the Gulf of Campeachy at this time of the year. No

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

clouds appeared in the sky, the sun, for no apparent reason, simply disappeared. Then those of us on deck noticed an ink-black cloud rise above the western horizon like a thing alive. The stewards hurried to raise the windows and close the doors of the smoking-room. Over the quarter-deck was a strong awning to which we scurried for cover, but the quartermaster warned us it would be no protection, so we ran for the saloon and from the lee windows watched the wild magnificence of the storm. The darkness was almost that of a moonless night. A rushing wind whistled through the cordage and the shrouds. Then came the rain, not as our rain in multitudinous drops, but in torrential fury. The deck at once was flooded and the scuttle holes ran like water from a steam pump. There was no lightning, but the wind raced across the sea like a soul in chase, still the sea was not running high, but the huge drops churned it into a white foam, as if a hail of rifle balls was fired into it from above. The storm passed off as quickly as it came, leaving the air much cooler and life on board more pleasant.

When our boat tied up at the solitary wharf of Frontera I called on the American vice-consul, Mr. Germain Hahn, to enquire about the route to Palenque, and ask instructions for the trip. The next day I boarded a small steamer and went up the Usumacinto River as far as the village of Januta. Here I hired a Yucatan Indian, who called himself by the peculiar name of Tipe-Chico, and from San

## LAND OF GHOSTS

Juan, the head of navigation, canoed the Usumacinto to Salta. From San Juan an unbroken desolation of wilderness extends along both banks of the river, and stretches inland for many miles; but it is a tropical wilderness of enormous wealth, of the finest and rarest forest giants, of strange vines, of rope-like creepers and of unnamed trees. Now and then we passed a solitary Indian's hut, with a rood or two of cleared ground planted in bananas, corn, guava, and sweet potatoes. At times the land on each side is a level plain for two or three miles, then are seen sloping hills, covered with noble trees, whose foliage displays a charming variety of every shade, from the palest to the darkest green and purple. The tops of some are crowned with bloom of richest hue, while the boughs of others droop with the weight of the profusion of fruits and flowers. In a country so extensively covered with forests as Yucatan, having every advantage of a tropical sun and the rankest mould of vegetation, it is natural to look for trees of great variety and large dimensions. Heedless, and bankrupt in all curiosity, must he be who can sail up this river without stopping occasionally to look upon the strange and wonderful trees which avenue its waters. Here on each bank, and stretching inland for miles, are the *vuletra*, the *touronira*, and the *moro*, towering in majestic grandeur straight as masts, sixty or seventy feet high, without knot or branch. The *hormigullo*, famous for its toughness, and the *encino negro*, for its hardness and dura-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

bility, the *palo gateado*, taking a higher polish than mahogany, the ebony and *sapoytillo*, as close fibred as our hickory, the *pimientillo* and *pino Colorado*, yielding sweet smelling resin, the locust tree and *palo gateado*, all help to fill out the great forests between Frontera and Salta.

From time to time we passed the alluvial bottoms where palms of almost every known species grow, from the *groo-groo* and *morich* towering high into the sky to the fan palm of the desert, whose fronds are reservoirs of water. Of exogenous trees the majority were leguminous, hanging their seeds in pods and forming flowers like a *vetch* or pea. From these lowlands steaming exhalations escaped bearing the deadly germs of marsh fever and malaria. The sun was setting when we arrived at Salta, a miserable burg, where we passed the night. The next morning on *burros* we began the journey for Palencia, fifteen miles from the ruins. Our path carried us through an arid and treeless plain, hillocked with ant hills and scorched and burnt with a blazing sun. Night brought us to the miserable peon village of Palencia, and as we could get no accommodation in the cane cabins we were obliged to sleep in our hammocks. The place swarmed with mosquitoes, and while Tipe-Chico slept soundly I arose and built a fire, in whose smoke I passed the night. But if Tipe was immune to the plague of mosquitoes he did not escape a more serious pest. While asleep he was sucked by a vampire. When I met him in the morn-



## LAND OF GHOSTS

ing his great toe was still bleeding, and his hammock was stained with clotted blood.

Nobody in Yucatan could explain to me how the vampire manages to draw such a large quantity of blood—from six to ten ounces—while its victim all the time remains in a profound sleep. I never heard of any one waking while the vampire sucked him; indeed so gently does this nocturnal surgeon draw the blood that the patient by some mysterious process is lulled into a profound sleep. The vampire measures about two feet from wing tip to wing tip, has very sharp teeth, not unlike those of a rat, and attacks sleeping animals as well as human beings. If he inflicts a wound with his teeth, one would think that the pain would cause the person who is sucked to awake, but it does not. When the victim rises in the morning he is languid and weak, and it is only when he sees the blood in his hammock that he realizes that the vampire was with him during the night. There are two species of the vampire in the forests of Yucatan and Guatemala, and both suck living animals. One is larger than the common bat, the other measures about two feet from wing to wing extended. We left Palencia in the early morning, passed through a matted and tangled forest, overgrown with bush, vines and creepers. When we emerged from this dense tropical bush the ruins of Palenque were in sight. Before us rose a mass of buildings of such vastness and such majestic design that at first glance the mind refused to accept the ruined

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

city as a reality. I looked for it to dissolve, and, "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind."

Buried in a dense tropical jungle, intensely hot, swarming with mosquitoes, scorpions, snakes and centipedes, Palenque, of Yucatan, is a fascinating study for the antiquarian and archæologist. One who has never visited the matted forests which surround the prehistoric and dismantled cities of Guatemala and Yucatan cannot imagine the inextricable confusion of gnarled roots, overturned tree trunks, climbing vines and decaying vegetation that bury everything in a gloomy, seething, deceptive covering. One step forward may land you on a fallen column, and the next bury you waist-deep in the rotting trunk of a fallen forest giant among scorpions, centipedes and ravenous ants. In the midst of an immense tropical wilderness of rapid growth and decay, in a desolation of solitude, striking by its isolation from human homes, lie buried for unnumbered years the ruined cities of Central America—Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Tlalpan, Palenque. Who built them? When we enter their gloomy but imposing halls we enter an infinity whose limits we cannot measure.

Every explorer, ethnologist and antiquarian who has visited and written on these marvellous remains of an unknown race claim that these ruins present problems which cannot be solved. From the days of Alvarado, who conquered Central America, to the young Harvard student whom I met wandering

## LAND OF GHOSTS

among the lithic halls of the Royal Palace at Uxmal, these forest cities are a mystery. Desiré Charnay writes that these great cities were built by the Mayas, who dwelt in these lands in pre-Spanish times. But the Mayas were in Yucatan when the Spaniards entered it, as Alvaredo learned to his cost, and they knew nothing of the builders.

Dupaix, who plunged into these pathless forests in 1806, claimed to have found proofs that these cities were raised by the Quichés, a race antedating by many generations the Nahuas, Mayas, and Yucatecas. And so it goes, from Pedro de la Laguna, who in 1802 sent a report to Madrid of his journey to Palenque down to Adolf Bandelier, who wrote a "Report of an Archæological Tour in Central America," there is no agreement of opinion, and no solution of the problem.

It is impossible to contemplate these mystic monuments of a lost civilization without experiencing a sense of awe and bewilderment. Scattered around the bases of the imposing palaces and halls still standing are huge blocks of diorite or serpentine that the eternal onslaught of time or the repeated shakings of earthquakes have hurled from the tops of the towers or lofty walls.

At Uxmal I entered the Hall of Rain. It stands on a pyramid, fifty feet high, with a base line two hundred and fifty by three hundred feet. Within the building was a *patio*, or court, one hundred feet square. The floors are concreted, the walls covered with stucco, and the cornices and

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

settings moulded and carved into weird and grotesque figures. From the floor of the building, stairways of stone lead to towers thirty feet high. There are miles of ruins here, some structures almost entirely dismantled, others still standing in fairly good condition. The Palace of the Priests, the Arch of Triumph, the House of the Soothsayers, and a building called the Kabah, are still almost intact, and furnish wonderful examples of arabesques, fretwork and grecques. At Palenque many of the buildings are overgrown with vines and bush ropes, and are hard to explore. The Temple of the Sun, a huge structure, is covered and filled with sculptured figures of elephants, dragons, serpents, and monstrous creatures like the ogres and gargoyles of mediæval churches. The imagination of the designer ran riotous over the temple. Here carved in stone are toucans, parrots, macaws, double-headed and feathered snakes, "monsters of the deep and the creeping and flying species of the land." The Temple of the Cross has been stripped of its statues, many of its weird and uncanny figures, and its wonderful cross and hieroglyphics. Fortunately these are all preserved in the National Museum of Mexico. In a previous chapter on the National Museum, I described the foliated cross found in this temple. I may add that it is doubtful if the mysterious writing on the cross will ever be deciphered, for the key to the characters is lost, and the ancient dwellers of Yucatan are gone forever.

The Royal Quetzal, the wonderfully coloured

## LAND OF GHOSTS

bird represented on the cross, is extinct. I saw a mounted specimen in the museum in Mexico City, a marvel of beauty and plumage. It is scarcely possible for the imagination to conceive anything more rich and gorgeous than the golden green colour which adorned the plumage of this splendid bird, or more elegant than the plumes which swept from the lower part of the back, forming a long tail of metallic brilliancy. The wings and back were of the most brilliant emerald and gold, the breast of fiery red, while the marvellously coloured plumes, when full grown, attained a length of three and a half feet. The quetzal still exists in the forests of Guatemala, the most beautiful of living birds, but the Royal Quetzal has disappeared for all time.

From the top of the Temple of the Cross the view was magnificent. Thirty miles to the north was the lake of Catasja, surrounded on all sides by forests of priceless and unfamiliar trees, while everywhere around lay oceans of ruined buildings. The immense temple, the ruined buildings, the great pyramids filled me with amazement. A few paces to the south rose the Temple of Inscriptions; beyond it the Pantheon; to the south-east, in the form of a triangle, was the Temple of the Sun; and beyond it again was another Basilica of the Cross. Everywhere the tropical forest was alive with snakes, pythons and constrictors, and birds of fascinating and beautiful plumage. At Chichen Itza I visited a temple perched on a high artificial mound, and approached by flights of stone steps from its four sides,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

on whose interior walls still exist paintings which are to-day the oldest and best examples of mural work, by the ancient dwellers of these mysterious lands, found in Central or South America.

The cyclopean walls of these structures represent years of unflagging labour and a high order of architecture. The size of the immense stones which enter into the construction of these temples, palaces and basilicas almost staggers belief while you are gazing on them. How they were separated from the matrix in the quarries many miles away, what tools were used in squaring them and rounding the columns, by what means they were brought to the cities, what machinery, if any, was employed to swing and carry them to the heights of the buildings—these are questions that rise spontaneously to the mind and remain there unanswered.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A CAMPAIGN OF HEROISM—MARCH OF THE SPANIARDS TO HONDURAS

'Tis a strange,  
An awful conflict—an unearthly war!  
It is as if the dead had risen up  
To battle with each other—the stern strife  
Of spirits visible to mortal eyes.

—*Whittier.*

THERE is not in modern history, and taking no account of numbers, perhaps not in all history an event less generally known or more striking to the imagination than the march of the Spaniards from the city of Mexico to the shores of the Bay of Honduras. It has no parallel in history. It was a trial of strength on the part of man—of human will and endurance—against the spectre of famine and the elemental forces of nature, not indeed of nature in its awful moods of hurricanes, cyclones, and volcanic wrath, but in its wild state, its anger and persistent irritability. The Parthian expeditions of the Romans, the Anabasis of the younger Cyrus, and the subsequent retreat of the ten thousand to the shores of the Black Sea, and above all the retreat of the French from Moscow are in a class by themselves and invite no comparison. The flight of the Tinontates—the last of the Hurons—before the pursuing hatred and hound-like pertinacity of

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the Iroquois, and the race for Manchuria of the Ubeck Tartars with the Cossack cavalry, amid starvation and pitiless cold in the early part of the eighteenth century, evoke our commiseration and pity, but the expedition of the Spaniards to Honduras asks only for our admiration and wonder.

After centuries of occupation by the white race there are yet in this mysterious land vast tropical regions where trackless wastes of pestilential jungles and reeking morasses rear an almost impassable barrier to exploration. There in the vast laboratory of the sun nature exults in her own monstrous fecundity, waited upon by a no less monstrous destruction. Prodigal of life, she seems to riot in a prodigious exuberance of creative force, and to fling out in reckless profusion whole systems of organisms, only to see them devour and prey upon each other.

Earth, quickened by the stimulus of solar energy and humidity, teems with germs, and, as in a seething hot-bed, forces them into rapid and luxuriant vitality followed by correspondingly swift dissolution. The very surface of the small lakes becomes covered each season with a tangle of succulent vegetation; a festering mass of decay where the putrescence of a disappearing vegetation vitalizes the birth of a new generation and feeds its rank redundancy.

Into this tremendous orgy of nature man enters at his peril—an unwelcome intruder upon the wanton mood of the universal mother. All her elements conspire against him and develop monstrous activi-



## MARCH OF SPANIARDS TO HONDURAS

ties hostile to his life. The earth breeds poison, the stagnant waters exhale fever, and the very air swarms with a microscopic life fatal to his own. Snakes and poisonous reptiles, of sanguinary and predatory habits, swarms of winged enemies of venomous bite and sting, and plants exuding infection make war upon the intruder and bar his path.

This was the land and these the enemies which confronted the daring Spaniard Cortez and his heroic band of veterans when he entered upon his historic march to the Bay of Honduras. Plutarch, writing of the achievements of Caesar, and comparing him with other great generals, says: "He surpassed one in the difficulty of the scene of action, another in the extent of the countries he subdued, this one in the number and strength of the enemies he overcame, that in the savage manners and treacherous dispositions of the people he humanized." Reading this encomium one would believe that the seasoned old campaigner and chronicler, Bernal Diaz, was recording his opinion of his friend and commander, Hernandez Cortez.

The Spanish chief had fought his way from the ocean, conquered the warlike Aztecs, rebuilt the city of Mexico after its ruin, and now hearing that his lieutenant, Christobal de Olid, whom he had commissioned to found a settlement in distant Honduras, revolted against his authority, Cortez, summoning the remnants of his veterans and his Indian allies to his aid, organized his punitive expedition. Early on the morning of October 12th, 1524, the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

troops mobilized in the plaza of Tacuba, a suburb of the Aztec city, and at once entered upon a march to the Caribbean Sea that will for all time hold a conspicuous place in the annals of military achievements. In advance rode the trumpeters, Ortego and Christobal; Coral, bearing aloft the banner of conquest, followed, and on their heels was a battery of artillery of four pieces. Then marched three thousand Indian allies, led and officered by their caciques and war chiefs. In their company, carried in palanquins and escorted by a plumed guard, were the king of Tacubaya and Guatemozin, the last of the Montezumas. Sandavel, the dauntless, rode at the head of his fifty marching veterans. Superbly mounted, unmailed and unvisored, came Cortez, conqueror of Mexico, and one of the most extraordinary men that ever trod the American continent. On his right was Father John de las Varillas, chaplain to the troops, and on his left, Pedro de Alvaredo, he of the giant leap and lion heart.

The romantic Marina, who saved the army at Cholula, female interpreter to the Spanish chief, and beloved of the army, was carried by negro slaves. Then came one hundred and fifty mounted men, battle-scarred veterans, bronzed to the hue of Etruscan statues, seasoned warriors all of them, revellers in the camp and fighting demons on the field. Masters of the sword they were, and trained to the use of the lance, whom no dangers could appal or fatigue conquer; with them were the scouts, whose work lay yet some weeks before them, two

## MARCH OF SPANIARDS TO HONDURAS

Flemish monks, a physician, and a surgeon. A drove of swine, a herd of cattle driven by negroes, a mob of camp followers, jugglers and tumblers, soon to succumb to fatigue and sneak back, imparted a ragged finish to a brave and warlike cavalcade. Before the conqueror stretched one thousand one hundred miles of unexplored land, unprofaned by the boot of the white man. Rugged mountains, torrential rains, pathless forests, swollen streams and raging rivers divided with venomous reptiles, savage tribes, and gnawing hunger, the horrors of the march. Against these Cortez was warned by his Maya guides, but the unconquerable Spaniard held to his resolution and crossed the Rubicon.

When the expedition came to the Medellin River, Cortez shipped his artillery, much of his ammunition, and many of his small arms to the mouth of the Rio Tabasco, flowing through Yucatan to the ocean. And now began in earnest the march to Honduras with all its attendant horrors. In four days they stood on the banks of a watercourse eight hundred yards wide, where, drenched to the skin, they lost three weeks felling timber, skidding and rolling logs and building a bridge. Traversing the forests and swamp lands of Copilco, they constructed fifty bridges. Here the guides and sappers deserted them. The Spanish chief took the precaution to bring with him a compass and maps drawn on cotton by Indian draughtsmen, showing the mountains, rivers, fordable streams, towns and forests. By these he now directed his march.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

On the frontiers of Chuatlau the expedition entered the marsh lands where the horses "sank to their ears," as Cortez expresses it, and where three Spaniards and many Indians were lost. In their rear stalked the spectre of famine, before them were rivers overflowing their banks, yielding humus, and everywhere eternal solitude and desolation. Exhausted and half-famished, with blistered feet and limbs chafed and raw from marching and wading, with unbroken spirits and undaunted hearts these men of iron held their course. Through forests almost impenetrable, across vast morasses, wading and swimming streams, bridging rivers swollen by tropical rains into great torrents, they kept the pace till at last they crossed into the land of snakes. Here they disappeared in the great mahogany and cypress forests, where the trees, swathed in dense masses of vines, swarmed with venomous serpents and noxious reptiles. Climbing lianas which crossed from tree to tree, like ropes passing from mast to mast, compelled the riders to dismount and lead their horses. The beasts, stung to madness by mosquitoes and *maranbuntas*—giant wasps—were controlled with difficulty by the men, who themselves were blistered and bleeding from the bites and stings of the poisonous pests.

Men began to fall in the ranks, overcome by exhaustion, hunger and mephitic exhalations escaping from a riotous and decaying vegetation. The weight of heavy armour, the cumbrous weapons, and an atmosphere charged with great humidity and car-

## MARCH OF SPANIARDS TO HONDURAS

bonic acid wore down the troops, and Cortez called a halt. Here a temporary hospital was thrown up, a clearance made, a foraging party sent back, and the men went into camp. Nothing but the inexorable demand of exhausted nature induced Cortez to select this place to rest and refresh his command. The woods swarmed with tropical life, with creeping things and ants whose bite burned like the prick of a red-hot needle. Through trees, creepers, vines and undergrowth, snakes, venomous insects and poisonous plants crawled. The heat was oppressive; to great heat they were inured, but now they contended with a subtle condition, with the weight and septic nature of an atmosphere charged with debilitating forces, with mephitic humidity, with electricity, with mysterious agencies inimical to human life. The immense melancholy of tropical ruin, the heavy, damp smells of fetid, feculent, warm air, as of mould freshly upturned, and the swarms of venomous insects began to affect the spirits of the men. Around them were vines distilling venom, cold, clammy creepers, whose touch blistered the flesh, and fanged, poisonous plants whose resemblance to snakes bore in upon the men fear and loathing.

The vast profundity and loneliness of the forest, and the millions of strange sounds wrought upon their imaginations till the ghosts of their dead comrades materialized, walked, sat down and slept with them. In the perpetual struggle of the blood to preserve itself from fermentation there was such

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

an expenditure of vital energy that little was left for bodily and mental exertion. Cortez buried his dead, broke camp, and, carrying his sick and exhausted on litters, began again his melancholy march. When they emerged from the gloomy depths, the soldiers were dazzled by the bright light, and staggered like men overcome with new wine. For one hundred and fifty miles they tramped, feeding on roots, mountain cabbage and food found in the deserted Indian villages. Through swales and marsh lands they waded, building more bridges, one of which consumed seven days and took for its completion one thousand trees, "thick," writes Bernal Diaz, "as a man's body." Overcome by hunger and fatigue, many unable to proceed lay down to die, and, to impart additional horror to their gruesome condition, captured savages were cooked and devoured by their Mexican allies. Here, says Torquemada, the Franciscan priest, Juan de Tecto, worn out by hunger and weakness, leaned his head against a tree and died.

Four miles from the town of Teotilac, a cacique of the Mayas, leading four thousand warriors, challenged their right to advance. Cortez shouting his battle-cry, "*Santiago, y a ellos!*" (St. James, and at them!), cut his way through the enemy with his cavalry and opened a passage for his exhausted men.

That night they bivouacked in Teotilac and fared sumptuously on maize and fruit. In one of the temples was the statue of a cruel goddess, whose

## MARCH OF SPANIARDS TO HONDURAS

fierce wrath could be appeased only by the flesh and blood of virgin maidens. Taken in childhood, girls were brought up in strictest seclusion till they ripened into the age for yielding their fair young bodies to the sacrifice. Cortez destroyed the idol, marvelling at the atrocious superstition.

For seven days they now marched through uninhabited wilds, skirting pestiferous swamps, or plunging into snake-infested fields. Torrential rains deluged them, bridgeless rivers confronted them, forests and stretches of sodden earth were ever before them; and now they began the ascent of the Pedernales—the Mountain of Flints—which for twenty miles lay in rugged opposition, contesting their march. The horses began to bleed, for they could hardly move a pace without slipping and cutting their legs. The soldiers, losing heart, were sinking on the mountain slope, and again the rations were failing. Cortez, with pike in hand, led the way over the most trying parts of the road; he moved among the men dividing food with the sick and famishing, cheering the despondent, and emboldening the faint-hearted. “At last,” he writes, “after twelve days of toil, the terrible flint road ended.” Forty-three men and sixty-eight horses perished, some from exhaustion and hunger, others slipped from the rocks into the abyss and were swept away by the raging torrent. They left Mexico City in October, 1524, and on April 15th, 1525, Cortez, thin and emaciated, but full of fight, brought what remained of his cavalry and infantry, with his auxiliaries, to the shores

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

of the Bay of Honduras, where his vessels, with food and recruits, awaited him. From the old books and archives in the library of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, I have gathered the incidents of this wonderful campaign. Of necessity I have omitted many harrowing but interesting details, but have recorded sufficient to show what manner of men were these early Spaniards.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### HONDURAS—ON THE WAY TO COPAN

To rest you here, to muse on flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene  
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell  
And mortal foot hath n'er or rarely been.

—*Childe Harold.*

ABOUT one hundred miles from its mouth, at the Bay of Honduras, there is an ugly gash in the side of the Motagua River. The streams, runlets and waters of the fever and hot, malarial lands of southern Honduras must some way force a passage back to the breasts of their mother, the great sea from which they were lifted by the mysterious power of the sun. They gathered in the valley of Chiquimula, united their forces and called themselves the Copan. Long ago, when torrential rains deluged the land, they moved northward, met the Motagua, tore open its side and ever since have right-of-way to the sea. Fifty miles from this opening, on the eastern bank of the Copan River, are the ruins of a dead city, buried in a dense thicket of exuberant vegetation. This is Copan. How old is it? When was the city built and by whom? Why was it abandoned? We know not. It was alive, for we have found the corpse.

When, in 1841, Stephens published an introduc-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

tory pamphlet to his great work, "Explorations in Central America," and told of these forest-buried cities of a civilized and vanished race, he was branded on a lecture platform in Boston as an impostor and a cheat. The tale was incredible. Then came Catherwood's wonderful drawings and illustrations, and those interested in antiquities were amazed. The discovery of the Rosetta stone and Champollion's decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics deepened antiquarian interest in Europe and scholars like Rouse and Cardinal Wiseman plunged into ethnological research. Then came the verification of the reports of the wonderful prehistoric cities of Central America, and learned men began to rearrange their ideas touching the origin of man. The French philosophers after contemptuously waving aside the inspirational record of man's origin, taught that original man was a savage, and that by his own unaided industry he rose to the perfection of his manhood and the perfect civilization then to be found in France, and only in France. The forest-shrouded cities of Central America told a different story, for here, at least, were proofs that the race descended from a high material civilization, and at the time of the discovery of America its people were drifting into barbarism and savagery. It is impossible to deny the civilization and vast antiquity of this land without using methods of criticism that would destroy the credibility of all history. But I am digressing into a thesis on ethnology and in a sense anticipating my mission.



MONUMENT OF COPAN AND MAYA SECRET WRITINGS ON  
LITHIC SHAFTS



## ON THE WAY TO COPAN

On Thursday morning, March 2nd, we left the Indian town of Totaliche and began our journey for the ruins of Copan. I say *we* for I was accompanied by Estaban Talpa, who served for guide, companion and handy man. Our horses were small but tough, and sure-footed, and cost eleven dollars each. Estaban wore a wide-brimmed Mexican sombrero, grass woven, and the safest and most sensible hat for the tropics yet invented. The dark copper skin of his body was covered by a cotton shirt and drawers. He carried, swung to a belt of jaguar skin, a *machete*, which in this country is axe, sword, knife and cutlass, and in the hand of a native is a weapon or instrument of indispensable utility. Travel in the tropics begins early, pauses during the heat of the day, and ends long after sunset.

Before Americans crowded into the first-class compartments on French and Italian trains, it was a common saying that only "mi-lords" and fools travelled on first-class tickets. Down in this extraordinary land the people tell you that only Americans and fugitives travel in mid-day. Even the fools are wise for four hours out of the twenty-four. People rise early in these "hot lands," and as we rode through the town many a friendly voice followed us with a *mas ver*—good-bye—or greeted us with *adios*—a pleasant journey to you—or literally, "we commend you to God." At La Venta, a cosey little cluster of wattled huts nestling in a depression of the Laguna Hills, we breakfasted on *tor-tillas*, eggs and excellent coffee. Here we entered

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the Yuca Plains, where the tree growth was low and scrubby, and consisted mainly of acacias, or thorn trees, and curious tree-like cacti, thirty or forty feet high, and covered, trunk and branch, with needles and spines. It is called in derision the monkey tree. Cervantes in his "Don Quixote," describes a land where there "were roads without a road and pathless paths." Over this Yuca land is spread a thick covering of dust, fine as miller's grist, that on the slightest provocation by wind or breeze, fills the air and destroys all traces of trail or mule-path. For more than half a century Honduras, like Nicaragua, claimed a bad preëminence over all other states of the world for war, bloodshed and chronic revolt against elected authority.

Official corruption, repeated uprisings and local rebellions have emptied the treasury and so exhausted the resources of this fertile country that at last the state is bankrupt, and the republic rests. Could these seething and fermenting states unite, and once for all bury their animosity and give up their absurd *fanfaronades* and expensive military shows and establishments, the future of this magnificent country would be assured. The whole of Central America measures in length but eight or nine hundred miles, varying in breadth from thirty to three hundred miles, yet no reliable survey has ever been made. Thousands of acres are untouched and unexplored, and the money which should have gone to open this land, build roads and teach the children, is wasted on military shows,

## ON THE WAY TO COPAN

and body guards for presidents, generals, judges and courts.

On the pathless desolation around us the heat was great, but not oppressive. It was not tropical; the odour of decay, of vegetable decomposition, and of fatal humidity was not with it. I was making for the Copan River, and if we met with no accident, we ought to enter the village of Tepetitlan in time for supper. Passing out of the Yuca desert, we entered the alluvial bottoms of the Rio Chiapa, rich in malma and alfalfa grass, on which herds of cattle were fattening. Beyond and around the cattle meadows, far as the eye could reach, the land was under cultivation. Here the sugar-cane attains a growth of nine feet in as many months; yields four tons to the acre, will rattoon for years without replanting, and as brown sugar can be bagged at fifty cents per *arroba*—twenty-five pounds—and white at one dollar, the profit is encouraging. Much of the juice of the cane is converted into *aguardiente* or rum, from the sale of which the government gets a snug revenue.

“Estaban,” I said to my companion, “what do they do with all these banana and rubber trees?” “These,” he answered, “are to shade the young coffee and cacao plants, which must be protected from the sun and wind.” From the cacao tree we get our chocolate and cocoa, and chocolate candies. We were passing through a country fertile as the famous peach belt of the Niagara peninsula, where fruits, unheard of at home, ripen and luxuriate.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

The *aguascati* is used in Waldorf salads, the *cherimoya*, like the Indian custard apple, is shipped to New York or London in air-tight bottles. Pineapples fairly rival those of the Azores. As for mangoes, the luscious relatives of the Oriental *mangonese*, they are so juicy that the Hondurians say they must be eaten in a bath. Here is the land of yams, oranges, plantains, manioc or bread-fruit, limes, and shaddocks. We passed out of this garden of paradise, traversed a treeless and arid plain, and as the sun was dipping to the horizon, rode into a group of huts dignified with the high-sounding name of Tepetitlan.

In many of the inland towns of Central America, there are no lodging-houses. As there are no commercial or other travellers, no provision is made for the visiting stranger. Indeed, by the dogs and children he is received as an enemy, and a trespasser. Here, however, I had to put in the night, and as it was a case of "any port in a storm," I closed with a decent-looking half-caste for accommodation for ourselves and beasts. Poor as the surroundings were, the meal was clean and good, and if it were not for the intrusive yet pardonable curiosity of the people the evening or early night—there are no evenings here—would have passed off pleasantly enough. In these inland village shanties there are no beds. A bullhide or hammock is much better and cleaner, and, when one is used to it, just as comfortable. My hotel for the night was a one-roomed shack, and before throwing myself on the bullhide the



## ON THE WAY TO COPAN

good woman of the house had "made up" for me, I took an account of stock. I counted four cats, two dogs, a macaw, the man and his wife, a daughter of fourteen, three children, and my *mozo*, or servant, Estaban. This was too much for me. I whispered to Estaban to swing my hammock in the palm-yard. "Why, señor?" he asked, with eyes swimming in amazement. "I fear the mosquitoes will suck the life out of me," I replied.

He threw up his hands, said the night air was bad, and that under the cover of the hut the mosquitoes were virtually an extinct species compared to the swarms that would fall upon me outside. However, I carried my point, and passed a memorable night.

The moon and stars shone with exceptional brilliancy, and whether it was the influence of the moon or the weird loneliness of the night acting on the spirits of some village cur, about one o'clock a dismal howl suddenly broke the solitude. At once a hundred canine throats began to bay, and a chorus of melancholy howls, prolonged and discordant, startled me. Then, and as if by common consent, and for no reason apparent to me, the chorus came to a sudden and startling end. Something must have happened. Either a strange dog entered the village alone—a thing unheard of—or some strange animal was speeding through the solitary street; for, as if by concerted action, the dogs came rushing, singly and in pairs, to the miserable village square, and without stopping to ex-

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

change opinions, ran silently and wildly down the street, and disappeared in the jungle. Then, in a quarter of an hour they returned one by one, or by twos and threes, and, seemingly without provocation, began to fight. As the combat deepened, the snarls, yells, and agonizing growls of the warriors split the air, and filled it with foam and fur. Presently, and as if by common consent, the battle ended, and the fighters trotted or limped for home. I began to wonder what it was all about, and while saying to myself, "What next?" I fell asleep.

## CHAPTER XIX

### IN THE HEART OF OLD HONDURAS

These are the tales those merry guests  
Told to each other, well or ill;  
Like summer birds that lift their crests  
And twitter and again are still.

—*Longfellow.*

WHILE I resided in Guatemala City I was a daily visitor to the library of the university, where are shelved many of the books carried away from the monasteries when the property of the church was secularized in Guatemala. One afternoon I found what was to me a treasure. The date of the publication of the brochure or bound pamphlet was 1576, and the title, "Report to His Catholic Majesty the King of Aragon and Castile by the Licentiate Don Diego Garcia de Palacio." Now who was Diego Palacio? Well, for our purpose it is enough for us to know that he was sent out to Central America by Philip II of Spain to report on the condition of the country. He was the first white man to explore the remains of the mystic city of Copan, and his description of the "ruins of these superb buildings constructed of hewn stone" is the most complete and satisfactory in existence. I will have occasion to cite him as authority—an authority supported by the testimonies of subsequent visitors—to corroborate me in statements that stagger

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

acceptance. To-day I confine myself to incidents of the route and the great forest "through which," writes Palacio, "we cut our way to the silent city." We breakfasted on *frijoles* or black beans, *tortillas* and chocolate, shook hands with our Indian family, and before sunrise were in the saddles.

Before renewing our journey each morning I was particularly careful to see that the hair *riata* and hammocks were strung to the pommel of the Mexican saddle. The rains of the previous week had soaked the alluvial lands through which we were now travelling, and for hours our horses never broke their walk. In the afternoon we crossed the Morita ridges, and descending we entered the desert lands of Guetenango. After a few hours' ride we came upon a muleteers' encampment, and with them I desired to pass the night. Riding into the camp I asked to see "*El señor capitán de los arrieros*," and was at once confronted with a Hondurian Indian, a fairly tall, swarthy complexioned man with long, coarse hair and restless, piercing eyes. His name was Lopez, and after I told him who I was, my mission, and where I came from, I was at once made welcome.

Neither he nor any of his band had ever heard of Canada, and when I told of our inland seas, our rivers which were never dry, of our ice and snow fields, our beautiful summers, they expressed great astonishment. Darkness rapidly succeeds daylight in tropical latitudes, but before night shrouded us I noticed two of the muleteers on hands and knees

## IN THE HEART OF OLD HONDURAS

examining the ground. Then they unwound my *riata*, tied it to one of three others, and formed a ground circle of twenty feet in diameter. These deserts are infested with centipedes, scorpions, snakes and creeping things, full of venom and inimical to human life. The rough, fibrous surface of the horsehair rope, called a *riata*, keeps out all dangerous reptiles. Notwithstanding tales of travellers, tarantulas, scorpions, and even snakes never attack a sleeping man if he is quiet in his sleep. But the slightest movement is a suspicion of danger to the hideous creatures, and woe to the sleeping man who moves. We hear much of and fear more the tarantula that is sometimes found in the banana bunches sent to us from Florida, but the tarantula of Florida, New Mexico, Texas and Arizona is a gigantic bush spider, and not a tarantula. The bite of the bush spider, like that of our own black spider, means painful irritation and passing fever, but unless our blood be in a bad state, nothing more.

Here the tarantula, centipede and scorpion inject a lethal poison, and if the wound is not attended to at once death or very serious results follow. At Pinos I met an Indian whose whole hand and forearm were withered, dried up and wasted shockingly. While resting in the afternoon, a centipede crawled across his hand. He foolishly brushed it off, but was too late, and will carry through life a wasted arm and hand. If he had grimly set his teeth, watched and let him crawl, the ugly thing would have done him no harm. In these desert wastes, among

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

sage brush, cacti and mesquite the rattlesnake is king, but he is never the first to attack. If you approach too near he rattles a warning, and if you are for peace, turn aside and pass on. But if, after he speaks, you yet approach, woe to you; he strikes, and then for you it's the knife, whiskey or the grave. Much, however, depends on the condition of your blood, the age of the snake, the reserve of poison in his glands, and your physical state when struck. The horned rattlesnake strikes to kill, and death it is.

But the most awful thing in these Hondurian deserts is the El Muerte—the death. He is the Pichu-Coatle viper, about ten inches long, of a gray coppery hue, and for its size is the most deadly thing alive. For malignity, cunning and malevolence the El Muerte is in a class by itself. Its head is small, triangular or lance-shaped, its eyes are like the point of a needle heated, while back of each eye is a puffed gland, a diminutive reservoir of the most deadly poison. Its fangs are as delicate as the finest cambric needle, but once they pierce a victim where the flesh cannot in an instant be scooped out—not alone cut out—writhing death follows. Such is the Pichu-Coatle, a repulsive, loathsome microscopic monster. I once, in the town of Guzman, was brought by a friend to the *chozas*, or huts of two Indians, who survived the bite of the El Muerte. The first to whom I spoke was a *manque-beti*, a “snake man,” who, like the Moki witch doctors, “had power over snakes.” He was bitten

## IN THE HEART OF OLD HONDURAS

by the viper in the back of the hand. At once, and as if by instinct, he leaped to his feet, with bloodless face and quivering frame he snatched his *machete* and cut off his hand, allowed the stump to bleed for a while, and then stopped the flow of blood with a tourniquet made of the pita fibre. His nerve left him, and with it went his hypnotic power over snakes. The other was an Indian *cargidor* or carrier, who with his companions stretched himself out for his mid-day rest. He must have stirred in his sleep, for he sprang to his feet with a moan of agony, and cried "*El Muerte!*" His face was the face of a dead man, his frame quivered with uncontrollable emotion, and when about to sink to the earth, one of his companions braced him up, and Emanuel, the other, seizing his hand, held his thumb erect, levelled his revolver, and fired. His life was saved, but when I greeted him I shook a thumbless hand. Fortunately, the Pichu-Coatle is found only in the most lonely and forbidding places, where man has no business and ought not to go. I do not know if the venom has ever been chemically examined, but one recoils with horror from the thought that any created thing conceals, even in the minutest quantity, a fluid that when it once touches man's blood bears with it death and loathsome putrefaction.

With Lopez and his mule-drivers I passed a pleasant and romantic evening. The *arrieros* are great smokers and gamblers and usually spend the early night playing *trienta-uno*, but the visit of a guest,

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

a traveller from the frozen north, was an extraordinary event and the night was passed in song and story. Transito Nunez sang in a rich baritone "*O pescador del 'onda*," his companions joining in the chorus, and in this wild desert land, under a moon swinging three-quarters full in a starlight sky there was a fascination even in the timbre of their voices. I entertained them with the history of our tribes; their life on the plains and on the reservations, their almost unconquerable thirst for *aguardiente*—called whiskey, and the fine of fifty dollars imposed by our government on any white man for selling one glass of the *chica* to an Indian. "*Valgame Dios*"—good heavens,—exclaimed Rafael Carera, "fifty *pesos*, for to sell only one little drinklet of *chica* to a poor man." Then Lopez told the story of Filipino and José Manta, brothers who sold their fifteen sheep in the market at Icaiche and bought ten gallons of whiskey to retail at the *fiesta* to be held in a few days at Santa Rita. With the keg stowed in a *huecala*, or basket, suspended from a pole they started over the mountain roads for Santa Rita. Knowing their besetting weakness, each took a solemn oath that neither would give the other a drop till Santa Rita was reached. Between them they had a *medio*—a three cent piece—and Filipino was the owner. It was a hot day and an uphill road. "*Caramba*," groaned Filipino after they had travelled a few miles, "it is very long without one little drink; for the love of the saints, my brother, give me to swallow."



## IN THE HEART OF OLD HONDURAS

"But how that thou thinkest not the promise," said the teetotaler Josè. Filipo groaned, set his teeth and trotted on. Then he stopped.

"It is so, *fratello mio*, that we swore not to give one little drink, but of the to sell was nothing said. *Mira!* look! I have one *medio*, sell to me one drink-let, my brother."

"*Sta buena*," said Josè, taking the *medio* and pouring out a small dose, "the good San Diego will witness I kept my oath, for of the to sell was nothing said." They shouldered their load and started again, but after going a few miles Josè came to a dead stop.

"*Caramba*, how buy not I too, a leetle drink. I am dry, Filipo. I am dry." Back to Filipo went the *medio*.

"But wait me a little," said Filipo, "and I from you buy me one drink that we together may drink joined."

"*A la vuestra salua!*—good health my brother," spoke Filipo. "Drink hearty, brother of mine," said Josè.

Back went the *medio* to Filipo again. Then Filipo did some thinking, looked at his companion, and said: "*Ay como estoy deshonorado*, thou hast had two swallows and I but one; go sell to me another that we are equal."

They sat down under a tree to rest. Back and forth went the nimble *medio*. Now Filipo, now Josè, and now both together. On the third day, the day of the *fiesta*, a muleteer passed that way.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

Two gray haired men lay under the tree. "*San Mateo*," cried the muleteer, "they are dead." The voice woke Josè.

"*Que hora es?*"—what time is it—he asked. "Three of the afternoon," and the mule driver pocketed the *medio* which he took from the hand of Filipino and passed on.

"Awake, my brother," said Josè, "and let us to the *fiesta*." "*Mala suelta*, it is so," and the brothers went on their way.

That night in Santa Rita friends asked, "And how to you went the travel?" "*Caramba!* we sold our sheep but ladrones robbed us and took all our money."

As usual, we rose with the earliest sign of dawn, and long before the sun had risen over the distant hills we were at San Pedro, on the fringe of the great Hondurian forest, eight miles from Copan. Here we breakfasted, left our horses with the *jefe politico*, or head man of the town, and entered the wilderness. We carried with us a skin of wine, *tortillas*, or cakes of the maize meal, a mosquito net, hammocks, a *machete*, and a bottle of the oil of the pimento plant, which, rubbed hourly on the hands, neck and face, saves you from mosquito bites.

The change from the bright light of the treeless plain to the gloom of the forest was startling. Not less so was the transition from the fresh, clean, solar air to an atmosphere of mephitic humidity and unfamiliar odours of vegetable decomposition.

## IN THE HEART OF OLD HONDURAS

There was light, but it was a phosphorescent, nebulous light, an indescribable luminosity, which inspired you with mysterious awe. And there was heat, an excess of it, but it was not the heat of the mid-day sun, nor that of a hot night, but a strange warmth, the warmth of the escaping elements of decomposing matter, of fermenting mould, of impalpable gases, of insect myriads dissolving into air. Death seems so omnipresent and luminous here—insect and vegetable death—that you think of it as a mystic something rising from the soft earth, and, with gauze-like tenderness, settling on the life around you. Here only, and for the first time, you understand what vegetable antiquity means. It is idle to look for the primitive soil here. It lies buried under the humus of perished forests that have succeeded each the other since the creation; under a sort of vegetable débris accumulating here for unnumbered ages.

As you advance the earth yields; you gently sink into it as into wool, and you experience the awful sensation that you are walking on the vegetable ruin of ages, on the dust of giant trees that perished long ago, and on a decay that has no name. Then there is a ghostly stillness in these tropic woods, a calm which tends to inspire you with that vague, mysterious awe which the men of old felt in the primitive forests of Germany and Gaul. As if to intensify the melancholy of your impressions, you may chance to hear that strange bird, the *panji*, singing its own death song. You pause to listen

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

to its lugubrious chant and ask your guide to tell you what it is. "Ah, señor! it is the *panji*, and it says, *El muerto esta aqui*—the corpse lies here." Then if you look up you see the wild fig vine strangling the life out of some noble forest giant, coiling round it, and, like a huge python, squeezing it to death. This monster vine is pitiless; silently, grimly it tightens, coil after coil. It is feeding on its victim, is growing larger and stronger, and the tree weaker and weaker. Then some night the giant falls, dragging with him his enemy, and the dead kills the living. But there is life here, too; everywhere a swarming of life, of unfamiliar, beautiful and hideous life. There is a calm here, but no peace, for insect, reptile, beast and bird are warring, preying upon and devouring each other. There is no truce, and will not be till "time shall be no more." Does this inexorable law of mutual destruction also compel our race, and, whether we will it or not, must we too, continue to slaughter our kind till the "mighty angel comes down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and swears by Him that liveth forever that time shall be no more"?

## CHAPTER XX

### COPAN—THE PHANTOM CITY

Rise, too, ye shapes and shadows of the past,

Rise from your long forgotten graves at last;

Let us behold your faces, let us hear

The words ye uttered in those days of fear.

—*Longfellow.*

IT is recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah that the apostate Israelites “built also high places of Baal to burn their sons for burnt offerings unto Baal.” We will not now discuss the antiquity of building “high places” for offering sacrifice, a practice which probably antedates the deluge and may be coeval with the “mighty men” the “men of renown,” referred to in the fourth chapter of Genesis. Now, the dominant character of the pre-Columbian cities of Mexico and Central America was that their temples, where human sacrifices were offered, were built, like those of the Babylonians and that of the apostate Jews in the “Valley of Slaughter,” on artificial elevations. Even when nature had anticipated and prepared for the coming of the builders by placing hills in the immediate neighbourhood of the sites selected by the elders, these mysterious people insisted upon raising, at an enormous sacrifice of labour and time, their own mounds for their own temples. It is possible that in some mutilated form a tradition of the Tower of Babel may have

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

continued with their immediate ancestors, and amid their wanderings and vicissitudes and lurid wars, continued to be a part of their national and religious life. These elevations naturally took the mound or pyramid shape, and supplied an unyielding base for the foundations of their massive buildings.

The immense mound on which I stood is built of rubble, broken sandstone, and shale, held together by a binding which practically solidifies the mass into a hill of stone. This huge pyramid is robed in a vesture of tropical weaving, whose warp and woof are vines and moss of marvellous variety and fascinating greenness. Like the Isaihan Babylon, Copan in other days was "swept with the besom of destruction," and it is now "a ruin of desolation and an hissing." Copan is probably the oldest ruin in the two Americas. It by no means follows that other cities may not have existed before it, for the builders of the city brought with them into this wilderness a civilization antedating this mound and recording other cities from which they came. The walls of the structures yet standing are of great thickness, which we would expect from an intelligent people settling in a land subject to periodic and violent earth tremblings. I have mentioned the sensation of awe I experienced when for the first time, from the other side of the Copan River, I saw the phantom city. Now that I stood amid the desolation of ruins, surrounded by a forest of immeasurable age, I felt that I was communing with the spirits of the mighty dead, and with the

## COPAN—THE PHANTOM CITY

voiceless souls of the unhappy victims done to death on this awful stone of sacrifice beside me. Covered with moss, on which the lizards crawl and where scorpions and creeping things are found, this frightful stone is a mortuary witness to the degradation of our race when estranged from God. Within it dwells a spirit of pathos, of infinite sadness, of boundless pity for the darkness of a race whose very dust is consumed by the wrath of time. I see everywhere around me the melancholy memorials of a nation that ran its course and perished in the veiled ages of prehistoric times.

Who can say that these ruined temples and altars may not be pitiful fragments from the wreck of a civilization that was lost long ago in the awful storms of civil war, or in the gradual debasement of individual and national life? The buildings of Copan are a confused mass of ruins worn down by the steady, relentless gnawing of time going on for ages, an invisible remorseless gnawing that never rests, and will not till the stones are pulverized to powder or buried for all time. In the dry climate of Egypt the monuments of man may defy the attacks of erosion, for there time is but a phantom, but here it is an embodied spirit of corrosive fluids and devouring acids. Here also nature is the friend of time. It creates and fashions for its ally weapons of such infinite tenuity and subtle innocency that to the eye of man they are mockeries and things to laugh at. They come out of the earth, these weapons, and have life, not the life of anything that

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

walks or creeps or flies, but they have a life of their own. They move stealthily, and with wondrous cunning attach themselves to the thing time has sentenced to death. And now they begin to distil acids of subtle venom, and by an instinct or nameless something, akin to sight in living things, feel an opening in the adamantine joints of the great buildings. Through it they enter, and like bacilli in the blood of the sick, they multiply and increase enormously. But they grow, these vegetable bacilli; night and day they grow, and wax strong, and become large, and some night they heave in their remorseless strength the great stones from their settings, and topple them to the earth. These are the giant vines, and where they fail to overthrow or corrode, sometime, it may be at intervals of a hundred, of two hundred years, a great earthquake rocks the place, and in its elemental anger overturns a whole wall. This is what happened to the great circus which, according to Juarros, was standing in 1700. The stone benches of the eighty tiers of the amphitheatre are broken into fragments, and the beautiful pavement is strewn with the débris. Here are the idols seen by Palacio nearly four hundred years ago, the statue twelve feet high "sculptured like a bishop in his pontifical robes," and the statues of Aueralcoatte and Itzqueye (sun and moon), his wife. To these, children, twice a year, were sacrificed, and after a successful war batches of captured warriors ruthlessly butchered.

On the walls of the dilapidated buildings still



## COPAN—THE PHANTOM CITY

standing, on the two altars and on the stone shafts or monoliths, are carved in relief ornamental designs which, with the rude tools of the sculptors, must have taken a long time to chisel. Human figures are posed in groups portraying in their attitudes, devotion, joy, or horror. Here, as in all the abandoned cities of Central America, the snake is conspicuously prominent. There are isolated figures of animals, and of almost all those creatures that "swarm in the waters and the creeping and flying species of the land," but the serpent is the dominant and most terrible figure on these monuments. He is represented in repose, feathered, double-headed, and striking. From his loathsome mouth protrudes a woman's head, out of the jaws of some hideous idol he is coming, now he is fashioned with others into a turban covering the head of a priest offering sacrifice, again he is coiled around the body of a writhing victim—some Quiche Laocoon—or woven into the vestment of a famous sculptured warrior. The statuary is most elaborately carved. Some of the persons represented are in an attitude of devotion, with hands crossed, and head uplifted; others hold sceptres of authority, and are gorgeously apparelled, wearing elaborate head-dresses ornamented with the plumes of the quetzal or cacique bird.

All these are of priestly or royal rank, wearing the robes and insignia of their high offices, and hinting that by this perished race the priesthood and royalty were on the same plane of reverential equality as

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

among the Chaldeans, Egyptians and Jews. "Kings were my ancestors," said Agrippa to Caesar, "and among them were high priests, whom our family considered equal to royalty itself." These priestly and royal personages have cone-shaped heads fashioned by pressure in infancy, the Phœnician or Semitic nose, and full voluptuous lips. These statues, but not all, are scattered on the ground, some entire, eight and ten feet long; others in fragments, and one of them, like Dagon of the Philistines, "was fallen on his face to the earth, the head and both the palms were broken." The two altars, now coated with *algæ* and tropical moss, are panelled and carry abundantly, the Maya hieroglyphics, or, to quote from Las Casas, "writings of certain characters which God only knows." If these mystic writings be ever deciphered something may yet be learned of this ancient race, its inherited civilization, and the devolution which ended in savagery or national extinction.

Standing amid the wreck and ruin of the temples, statuary, and altars of this vanished race, whose language no man may speak, whose faces are unlike those of any people known to us, it is impossible not to credit them with a certain grandeur of thought, high architectural skill, indomitable energy, and a debasement of the moral and religious life supremely sad and pitiful. With infinite loathing, but with commiseration for their mental and spiritual darkness, we recoil with horror from the contemplation of their human sacrifices and hu-



MONUMENT OF COPAN AND MAYA SECRET WRITINGS ON  
LITHIC SHAFTS



## COPAN—THE PHANTOM CITY

man flesh-eating, done to propitiate the wrath or invoke the good-will of some monstrous god. But we must not forget that, before the coming of our divine Lord, these horrible rites were universal, even among the most civilized nations. Hecuba was sacrificed by her own people on the tomb of Achilles, the Greek. Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, was given up by her father and sacrificed to propitiate the gods of Greece when the nation was threatened with extinction. From the Greeks human sacrifices passed to the Romans, nor does the refined critic Horace object to it, only suggesting that the death of the victim should take place in secret.

In Seneca's play "Medea," the throats of the children were cut by their own mother in full view of the audience. Ennius, the Roman poet, introduces in one of his plays a banquet of human flesh prepared and eaten before the eyes of the people. Human sacrifice was so common in Rome that, according to Pliny, a few years before the Redemption, a law was passed expressly forbidding it. At Carthage, the rival of imperial Rome, children were ruthlessly burned alive in the brazen furnace of Melkarth, the Moloch of the Bible. In more than a dozen places of the Old Testament we find the Hebrews accused of burning their children. There is not in all literature, sacred or profane, anything to be compared to the awful indictment framed by Ezekiel, the prophet of God, in his sixteenth chapter, against the apostate Jews who consorted with

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the Ammonites and Moabites, the human flesh-eaters and sacrificers of their own children. "Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters and these hast thou sacrificed to be devoured." When the microscopic search of scepticism, which has sounded the seas and searched the heavens to disprove the existence of God and the divinity of the Christian religion, turns its attention to human society and can find a place on this planet where, before the coming of Christ, outside of Palestine, human life was held sacred or where a virtuous woman could be found, it will be in order for the sceptic to jeer at the Christian religion. Even to-day, where the Gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundations for decency and moral cleanliness, an honest man cannot live and bring up his children unspoiled and unpolluted. Not alone as a prophet, but as a student of history did Isaiah, thousands of years ago, say that "the nation or kingdom that will not serve God shall perish." All history proves it and as "the strength of the pack is the wolf" the strength of the nation is the individual man. What he is, society is, as society is, so is the nation.

## CHAPTER XXI

### FROM COPAN TO THE REGION OF MYSTERY

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,  
Who believe that in all ages  
Every human heart is human,  
That in even savage bosoms, there are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not,  
Listen to this simple story.

—*Hiawatha.*

COPAN was partially inhabited when Hernandez de Chaves conquered Honduras. When in 1700, Diego Fuentes visited the forest-shrouded city, the great circus or open-air theatre still remained intact, and Copan “was a deserted city, which filled me with astonishment.”

Honduras, Nicaragua, Yucatan and Guatemala have all the marks of a hoary antiquity, bristling with unsolved problems that are baffling antiquarian research and archæological wisdom. The tidal remains of an ancient civilization strew the land; we gaze upon them, examine them, shake our heads and look wise.

In my wanderings in out-of-the-way places, in the bypaths and byways outside the line of travel, and during my many sojourns with half-savage tribes, I have come face to face with habits, customs, and practices whose universality chronicles the unity of the human race, and the perpetuity

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

of which among all pagan peoples—continuing in some form even among Christians—is, to say the least, curious if not startling. Among the great problems in the mystery of past human history the monoliths and mounds which are found on our habitable earth still tax the ingenuity of antiquarians. Beginning with the mysterious pyramids of Egypt and Cholula, Mexico, or perhaps Nagkon Wat of Farther India, these strange monuments, some of gigantic proportions, elaborately wrought—others rude, with hardly any sculpture—are scattered everywhere. To us the best known are the cromlechs like those of Stonehenge, England. But these mystic remains are found in Northern Africa, Madagascar, and all over Asia, from Mount Sinai and the Caucasus to India. The traveller passes them in Siberia, in Japan, in Western France, in Denmark, Sweden, and in Northern Germany as far as the Oder River. They are standing often alone and isolated in South and Central America, and where stone was not to be found they were built of baked and puddled earth, as in the Scioto and Mississippi valleys. And now those who have visited the Easter Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, tell us that some of the most wonderful and even terrifying monuments, rudely sculptured, are found here and there in these mysterious islands. In many localities where these weird and solitary memorials of the remote past are found, there are no quarries or huge stones, yet many of the blocks in the foundations of these structures weigh from



## THE REGION OF MYSTERY

forty to fifty tons. Scientists and archæologists have puzzled their heads over the import of these monuments, but to me the greatest problem is how a primitive people, without a knowledge of engineering or modern machinery, and in many instances without draught animals could have moved and swung into position these immense rocks.

Again, how account for the origin and universality of serpent worship? Everywhere, everywhere before the appearance of our divine Lord upon the earth the serpent was adored. All over Asia, Africa, and America, temples were built in his honour, and even the enlightened races of Europe, such as the Roman and the Grecian, were tainted with this vile idolatry.

The serpent is the central figure in African Vaudaux worship, and among some of the negroes of Hayti and other West India Islands even to-day he is housed and venerated. If my memory is true Father Lalemant in his letter, published in the "Jesuit Relations," says that one of the Huron Indians of the priest's escort accidentally stepped upon a snake, then filled his pipe, and returning, blew tobacco smoke upon it as a peace offering. Some years ago there was a popular song called, "Never Take the Horseshoe from the Door," but neither the writer of the song nor any one of the thousands who sang and whistled it probably knew that the superstition of the horseshoe was a survival of the times when the worship of the snake was forbidden in Rome by an imperial edict.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

There is no continuous problem in the melancholy annals of our race so hard to solve as the problem of serpent worship; there is no chapter in all our history so filled with mystery and pathos as the chapter dealing with the serpent. From the hour that God accomplished His will in making man to His image and likeness, the serpent enters into the life of the newly-created being, stays with him and becomes perpetuated in his offspring. From that fateful hour, among all nations unilluminated by the "orient light from the Son of Justice," among all civilized and uncivilized pagan races, the serpent has survived and come down to us coiled around the pillars of the Temple of Time demanding and receiving the adoration of immortal man, exacting sacrifices from soul and body, and carrying terror and awe to the hearts of the bravest and most intelligent of God's creatures.

But let us pass on. My own church, the Church of England, that of the Jews, Greeks, Russians and German Lutherans, enforce or recommend fasting as a very beneficial and salutary spiritual mortification. It was so held by the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the ancient Jews, and antedates the deluge. In times past it was universal, especially among the Semitic and Hamitic races. The Ninevites, to avert the destruction of their city, imposed a fast even upon the domestic animals, and the royal prophet David, pleading for mercy reminds God that "I humbled my soul with fasting."

## THE REGION OF MYSTERY

Now, how did this propitiatory practice find its way into the North and South American tribes? This is not the place to cite authorities, but all reputable historians and travellers who have studied the customs of the aboriginal nations, tell us that the practice of fasting, particularly when calamity threatened the people, was universal. I know for a fact that among the Arrawaks, the Macoushi and Carib Indians of British Guiana no youth is promoted to warrior rank, or warrior to chieftainship, till he has purified himself by a vigorous fast. Everywhere in the Old and New Testaments, among the prophets, the apostles, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the thread of the fast runs as plainly as a silver warp through black velvet. Is this practice of propitiation a natural emanation of ourselves, or is it an inheritance from the dawn of our race? Now, let us come to another extraordinary fact. In the sixth chapter of the Book of Numbers, eighteenth verse, it is ordered that the Nazarites, of whom were Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, "when they shall separate themselves unto the Lord . . . shall shave their heads at the door of the tabernacle." This was done by the command of God Himself. St. Paul after his conversion to Christianity, "shaved his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow." To-day, and from the establishment of the monastic orders, even among the Cenobites and Ancorites in the second and third centuries, the renunciation of the world and incorporation into the spiritual order was and is begun by shaving

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the head. The novice, when graduated into any of our religious orders for women, surrenders her hair, and the tonsure of the priests in Latin America, Quebec and Latin Europe is but a survival of this very ancient and Biblical practice. On the side of the woman, parting with her hair is indeed an act of self-sacrifice, for "if a woman has long hair, it is a glory unto her," writes St. Paul to the Corinthians.

The cutting of the hair must, therefore, have a deeper meaning than that implied in an act of self-denial. Now, how did this practice find its way into the forests of South and Central America? All early historians, Landas, Ximenes, Las Casas, Brasseur de Bourbourg, who passed thirteen years with the people and translated their sacred book, the "Popul-Vuh," mention, without attempting to explain the custom, the cutting of the hair as an act of sacrifice and preparation for certain religious ceremonies or introduction to a particular order. In Nicaragua the Nacon, or war chief, elected every three years, shaved his head on taking office, and in Yucatan, the Tapaligui, holder of the most honourable office of the state, not only shaved his head, but was obliged to live a life of continence, and abstain from meat and wine. I reluctantly abstain from giving my views on this subject, for I am dealing with facts only, leaving reasons and motives to be explained by others. Among the unconverted tribes of this strange land there is a superstitious dread of some mysterious being which, like the

## THE REGION OF MYSTERY

Leprehauns of Ireland, the Jinns of Asia, the goblins, gnomes and sprites of England and western Europe and the jumbies of Africa and the West Indies, takes a demoniacal delight in haunting and waylaying travellers.

Here he is called the Yama and assumes various forms, though he prefers to take the shape of a small old man whose body is covered with hair. The folklore of the Indian is saturated with his extraordinary performances. Now how did this mythically strange man originate, and by what singular law of perpetuation did he survive the migration of our race and find his way into foreign lands, even into America? I pass over other practices and ceremonies such as circumcision, perpetual fire, propitiation of demons, vestal virginity, *suttee* or wife sacrifice and the laceration of the flesh for penitential reasons, common to these Indians as to the ancient Jews, East Indians, Mohammedans and other Asiatics. The universality of these practices, to my mind, makes for the unity and origin of man in some cradle-land in India, Central Asia or perhaps in Lemuria or Atlantis, the lost continents.



## CHAPTER XXII

### NICARAGUA—A LAND ACQUAINTED WITH AFFLICTION

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Radical faith, and the Radical faith is this. Justice is justice, because the majority so declare it. And if the majority affirm one thing to-day, that is right; and if the majority affirm the opposite to-morrow, that is right.—*Froude*.

THE morning I left the miserable little village at the mouth of the Realejo River for Leon, Nicaragua, it was raining fiercely. A curious crowd assembled at the mouth of the river to see us off. While I was stepping into the boat the bell in the village church began to ring. All hats were removed, all talk was stopped, and with bowed heads the sailors and those on the river shore stood still. With the last stroke of the Angelus bell our men gave the *hoo-pah* shout, the captain blew his conch shell, the *marineros* bent to the oars, we shouted *adios* to the shore crowd, and swept into mid-river.

For miles the banks of the Realejo were lined with gamelote grass, forming a sedge where the river broadened into shallow reaches. The silence was broken only by the whistle of the lizard or the bark of some far-off marsh frog. The river as we advanced deepened and narrowed, and the rising banks took on a covering of cabbage palms, whose broad, sweeping leaves flung a shadow on the quiet

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

water. All day in a blazing sun the toughened rowers pulled against the current, tying up only for dinner and the daily siesta, or mid-day rest. It was long after sunset when our anchor was run out in the middle of the river, and we hove to for the night, assured by our captain that few mosquitoes would trouble our rest. The air was hot and steamy, too hot to sleep in the bullhide *chopa*, so we sat out smoking and chatting with Diego, our captain. Frogs, lizards, tree-toads, sang, croaked and whistled in the shallow inlets, indifferent to discord or harmony. Innumerable fireflies flitted through the vines and palm-trees, and furnished us an unexpected display of bluish green pyrotechnics. Not many miles from where we now lay at anchor, the captain told us, the rebel chief Bernabe Somosa was captured after the defeat of his forces by the army of the government. He was taken to the town of Rivas, tried by court-martial, sentenced to death, and shot. He was a cruel and merciless scoundrel, whose memory is held in execration. No other part of the American continent, perhaps not of the world, has suffered so continuously from the scourge of civil war and the knife of the political assassin as Central America.

A beneficent Creator made it a paradise, and man, with his unholy ambition, his unrestrained and revengeful passions, has barely failed to make it a desert and almost a hell. To the man who knows the history of this unhappy land, our annual Thanksgiving Day has a meaning deeper than



## NICARAGUA

finds expression in a day of sport and a "good time." For eighty-five years Central America has been a huge theatre, on whose gruesome stage was enacted a continuous tragedy, and across whose boards there walked the ghosts of slaughtered men, women, and children. Adventurous corsairs, buccaneers, assassins, pirates, appear on the stage, the curtain falls on them and rises again, this time on the grim spectres of civil war, plagues, earthquakes, and volcanic horrors. Even while I write General Toledo, at the head of twenty thousand regulars and conscripts of San Salvador, is preparing to invade Guatemala to resent some real or fancied insult offered to San Salvador by President Cabrera, of Guatemala. But for prolonged agony, for bloody feuds, for internal broils and political upheavals, Nicaragua was and is pre-eminently conspicuous. It is the *Haceldama*—the field of blood—of the republican states. "Out of this sand," said Pope Gregory IX, holding a handful of earth he picked up in the arena of the Coliseum, "you may squeeze the blood of martyrs." From out the soil of Nicaragua the strong man may press the blood of her sons slaughtered by their own kith and kin.

Under the Spanish régime the kingdom of Guatemala was known as the Audiencia, and took in Costa Rica, Honduras, San Salvador, Yucatan, Chiapas, Nicaragua and Guatemala. These states, in 1821, threw aside their allegiance to Spain, and after two years formed a confederacy called the republic of Central America. The constitution

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS<sup>1</sup>

was copied almost in its entirety after that of the United States. The signatures to the constitution were barely dry when dissensions threatened its permanency. Jealousies, conspiracies, riots, revolts, uprisings, ending in fraternal wars and violent separations, followed. These miserable feuds continue to this day and probably will continue till some strong man strides into the arena, declares himself a dictator, welds the petty republics into a homogeneous body, and, like Diaz of Mexico, rules as a benevolent despot.

Nor must we, among whom freedom, to cite Macaulay, has broadened down from precedent to precedent, be too severe in our condemnation of these mixed races. The memory of the Scottish tribal wars and Irish clan feuds, the faction fights and party fights, is too recent to warrant our boasting. Students of the inner history of the United States will remember how perilously near violent disruption was the union eight years after the signing of Jay's Treaty, and what masterly tact and diplomacy were summoned to the framing and binding of our own confederation. Three-fourths of the population of Central America have only been redeemed from barbarism for three hundred years, while we are heirs to a civilization of seventeen centuries and trained in the great Christian school of self-denial and self-sacrifice. More than that, the timber entering into the construction of our civilization has been hewn from trees planted and grown in Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Norman soil.

## NICARAGUA

For eighty-five years the Central American republics have tried to work out in strife, tyranny, and anarchy, the fate imposed upon them by a premature assumption of rule by peoples unprepared for such responsibility, and out of the welter of rapacity, dishonesty and violence there has come a pitiful and dismal failure. Of all forms of government a democracy or republic asks from the governed and governing a large measure of intelligence, unswerving honesty on the part of the executive and administrative bodies, and some approach to common sense among the people. To expect these mixed races, these human hybrids, to accomplish that which is testing the strength and intellect of France and the United States to achieve, is unfair to them and contrary to all Roman and Grecian precedent.

Diego, our captain, told us he anchored in mid-river in preference to bivouacking on the shore, where mosquitoes would make rest a mockery. It may be so, but all the same, the pests found us out, and that night I got a foretaste of purgatory. The mosquitoes of the Realejo River, for venomous and persistent attack, for bloodthirsty ferocity, have a bad pre-eminence over the worst I had ever met with elsewhere, and I say this having in mind my experience in the swamps of the Orinoco and the forests of Demerara. With the dawning of the day we were again amove.

Suddenly a sound between a shriek and a roar came to us from the river bank. "What is it, Diego?" I asked. "The lion bird," answered the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

captain. For miles as we advanced the cry of the bird broke the stillness of the forest. Unlike our northern diver, it never calls on the wing, but soars to a limb of the towering mora, and as the sun rises, so, too, rises over the forest the shriek and howl of this most extraordinary of forest birds. The lion bird is no larger than a pigeon, and how it can take in enough air to give out such an ear-splitting and far-reaching volume of sound is indeed surprising.

The Realejo narrowed as we moved on, and the vegetation and very air became more tropical and oppressive. High up on the wild fig-trees were perched, chattering and grimacing, black, long-tailed monkeys, their wonderfully human faces peering down at us; the mothers holding with one arm to their breasts their hairy little babies, while the males aimlessly scratched their heads, or made faces at us as we courteously bade them good-morning and passed on. We rowed through a tangled mass of wild, luxuriant vegetation, through tree ferns and giant palms, and strangely drooping parasites. In the estuaries of the river, basking on floating or stationary ceiba logs, were multitudes of iguanas or *serpentes*, as old Peter Martyr, the historian, calls them, water lizards, large and of giant wrack, and *cayans* or Central American crocodiles, huge fellows whose bellowing at night is heard afar off. Early on the morning of the third day's sailing we sighted the historic city of Leon, high up on a commanding elevation, and from afar beautiful and fair to look upon.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### “ IN THE BRAVE OLD DAYS ”

With all her cannons loaded, and her decks for action cleared  
And her death's head at the mast-head sailed the bold buccaneer.

—Scott.

IN 1523 Hernandez de Cordova, conqueror of Nicaragua, fought his way from the Pacific coast, and after subduing tribe after tribe claimed the territory for his royal master and founded the cities of Cordova and Leon. What a race of giants were these early Spaniards! Men of iron constitution, of unsatisfied ambitions, whom no dangers could appal or fatigue conquer, and withal bearing with them in their romantic campaigns the lofty ideals of the Iberian Hidalgo. Cruel! Of course they were. Sherman was cruel when he marched to Atlanta, so cruel that to-day the South reviles his memory. Lord Kitchener, the Sirdar of Egypt, was cruel when he carried destruction into the hordes of the Soudan, and dragged from its tomb the putrefying body of the Mahdi. Cruelty is inseparable from conquest, and as of old, it is now, and ever will be *vae victis*—woe to the conquered, and again, “to the victors belong the spoils.” When the Germans laid upon the bleeding back of France the war indemnity that startled the civilized world by its weight and colossal proportions, Thiers cried out:

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

*“Grand Dieu!* Your Imperial Highness, if a man began at the Redemption and counted until now, he would be counting francs for the next fifty years before he would reach this terrible amount.” “I know it,” answered the implacable Bismarck for his master, “but we brought with us a Jew who counts from the deluge.”

Nor can we, of all peoples, decently afford to put the lash on the backs of the Spaniards for isolated instances of cruelty to their Indian slaves. As time counts, it is not so long ago since slaves in Barbadoes on the least symptom of insubordination, were killed without mercy, sometimes burned alive, as in the Southern States to-day, or hung up in iron cages to starve to death and rot. Nor need we go back very far in the history of England, to the time when wretched creatures, Jews, were dragged by dozens at horses' tails through the streets of London, broken on the wheel, or torn to pieces by infuriated mobs. So let us keep quiet lest these foreign writers “come back at us.”

The year before Cordova founded this city an extraordinary man, Gil d'Avila, sailed out of Panama, carrying with him in his caravel of thirty tons, three hundred infantry and thirty-two horse. Gil was a daring adventurer, a fearless sea-rover, whose ambition was to have his name writ large on the temple of fame. Among those who sailed with him out of Panama were some who were influenced by avarice and the hope of glory. Among them was the high-spirited cavalier, bound on romantic

## IN THE BRAVE OLD DAYS

enterprise; the restless adventurer, in quest of new laurels in unsailed seas; the fearless caballero, wooing the charm of novelty in unexplored lands; and the disgraced courtier, resolved by reckless daring to wipe out the memory of his humiliation. They landed on the southern coast of Honduras, fought their way through the wilderness and open plains, reducing villages and towns, and finally entered the territory of the warlike cacique Diriangán, then and now known as Nicaragua. At the head of seven thousand of his fighting men, Diriangán barred the pass. This was in April, 1522. Gil carried the fight to him, and won the battle. He returned to Panama, where his men gave an alluring and marvellous account of the wealth of the country, the fertility of the soil and its wonderful people.

Avila at once sailed for Spain to ask a royal audience and seek means to settle his conquest and establish a government. When he returned he heard with amazement and chagrin that Hernandez de Cordova had conquered Nicaragua, and already had named and begun to build the cities of Leon and Cordova.

Gil d'Avila at once collected a few daring adventurers, sailed again from Panama, and entered the Bay of Honduras, crossed the country and sacked the infant cities of Hernandez de Cordova. One or two skirmishes with the troops of Cordova followed, the feud ending with the appointment of Avila as the first governor of Nicaragua. He died the year

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

after his appointment, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Rodrigo de Contreras.

The policy of the home government in dealing with the Indians was, from the beginning, a policy of conciliation and paternalism. In common with the church, it conceded much and yielded to the aboriginal customs, traditions, habits and feelings, where these did not conflict with the natural law or the Noachic precepts. Spain established the famous "Council of the Indians," which issued, under the royal seal, orders safeguarding the rights of the tribes and forbidding any of its colonial officials to hold Indian slaves. Rodrigo de Contreras ignored this command of the council, and by common report treated his slaves with great harshness and cruelty. Charges were preferred against him by the bishop of Nicaragua, Antonio de Valdivieso, and he was summoned home to meet them.

Meanwhile his son, Hernandez, raised the standard of rebellion against the king of Spain. He defeated the loyalists in one or two engagements, murdered the bishop and sacked the city of Leon. Flushed with victory, he sailed for Panama, took the city, and established a revolutionary Junta, intending to extend his conquest and ultimately build up an independent kingdom. This was in 1549, and before the end of the year he died, and with him his dream of conquest. Leon was rebuilt on its old site on the western shore of Lake Managua, at the foot of the great volcano of Momotombo.

But some curse seemed to have fallen on the new



## IN THE BRAVE OLD DAYS

city, and an avenging Nemesis to haunt its streets. The huge volcanic mount deluged it with red-hot ashes and incandescent sand, a plague ate up its people, the earth shook its great buildings and tumbled its cathedral towers to the ground. The Nicaraguans began to believe their city was accursed, that God was avenging the death of their martyred bishop, whose blood had dried upon and now dyed the steps of the altar where he sank to his death from the poniard of Hernandez de Contreras. They began a *novena* to St. James, Spain's patron saint, and entered upon a solemn fast, as did the Ninevites of old, to stay the avenging strokes of God. A succession of calamities followed, and in despair they resolved to abandon their beloved city and build a new Leon by the side of the Indian town of Subtiaba.

Sunday morning, May, 1610, after a solemn high mass, the inhabitants of Leon, following their bishop and clergy, the officers of the fort and municipality, and bearing aloft the banner of the House of Braganza, marched in procession through the gate of San Pedro and bade good-bye forever to the doomed city. The ruins of old Leon remain to this day, overgrown with vines and vegetable parasites, where scorpions, lizards, and centipedes crawl, and bats dwell. The cruel and sacrilegious deed of Contreras is yet spoken of with horror among the peons, with whom it lingers as a tradition, and many profess to see, even now, the blood of the bishop on the steps of the altar of the old church.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Caribbean Sea and Pacific coast swarmed with French privateers and English corsairs—freebooters of the ocean, unrecognized, uncommissioned, fighting their own battles on their own responsibility, unlicensed rovers, starving to-day and to-morrow gorged with plunder: Henry Morgan, knighted for his rascally deeds, and made governor of Jamaica, sacked Panama, and burned the city; Drake, the vulture of the Atlantic, and so great an object of terror to the floating Spaniards that his death moved Lope de Vega to sing a hymn of triumph in his epic poem, the “*Dragontea*,” Penn and Venables; Daniels, the Dick Turpin of the Caribbean Sea, who carried a chaplain and had prayers said before sacking a town or sinking a Spanish galley.

What a shadowy procession of great and clever scoundrels, of adventurous and courageous cut-throats, of *corsarios*, pirates, privateers, and guerillas of the sea, passes before us at the command of memory, and once again enact their bloody parts in the tragedies of the centuries that are buried with them! Conspicuous among these rovers of the sea was Captain Dampier, who, in September, 1685, sailed up the Realejo with as reckless a crew of pirates as ever scuttled a ship or cut a throat. Dampier entered Leon by night, slaughtered many of its men and looted the city. He burned the hospital, cathedral, Convent of Mercy, and destroyed many of the finest dwellings.

After Nicaragua cut loose from Spain, Leon be-

## IN THE BRAVE OLD DAYS

came a revolutionary storm-centre, where the opposing political parties, ravenous for the contents of the treasury trough, began to devour each other. In a single night one thousand houses were destroyed, the richest and best part of the city eaten up by fire, and brothers and kinsmen bayoneted one another in the city squares. Even yet entire streets show the ravages of civil war, and this city, once known as Mohammed's Paradise of the Indies, is pitted with the marks of a dreadful experience, like unto a giant coming out of the smallpox. Such are Nicaragua and Leon, its capital, where the franchise is a mockery, and republicanism a farce and an impossibility.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### WHERE THE BLOOD OF RACES COMMINGLES

From these two came we all;  
And from their blood our blood is brewed  
And thus we all are brothers.

—*Young's "Night Thoughts."*

BEFORE bidding good-bye forever to Nicaragua and its beautiful capital, Leon, which was my home during my wanderings in the republic, I ought to say something of the people, of the mixing of the blood of strange races, of the blending and fusing of the mysterious African and prehistoric American races with the Celto-Spanish and Iberian stock, which has occurred and is occurring in this extraordinary land. Nowhere could I view to better advantage the outward results of the fusion of race with race, or see more satisfactory effects of the Hamitic and Semitic graftings on the Japhetic tree than at high mass at the cathedral on Sunday. I had already attended an early mass at the Church of the Mercedes, and as a student interested in my fellow-men, I was free to be present in the cathedral during the great Sacrificial Act, the mass.

In the cathedrals of Latin America, as in Europe, there are no pews. From the rising of the sun until the beginning of the high mass, at some one of the many side altars mass is being offered up, and the worshippers are always streaming in or out of the

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

building. The Protestant tourist and the travelled Catholic not understanding this custom, often make the mistake of assuming that the congregation which is present in the church when they enter on Sunday make up all who attend divine service and return home with a very low opinion of the devotion of the people. The fact is, from early morning in some part of the sacred edifice the Holy Sacrifice is taking place, the people are coming in and going out, and because they are coming in and going out, pews and chairs would be a nuisance. When I entered the cathedral mass had already begun. The splendid choir, carried forward and upward by the support of a great organ whose tones were mellowed with age, were singing the "Kyrie," the officiating priest was seated on the epistle side of the altar, to his right and left the deacon and sub-deacon of the mass. Occupying his throne and supported by his episcopal entourage, the archbishop of Nicaragua offered to the eye an imposing and venerable personality. His crosier, ring and pectoral cross were the insignia of his high and holy office, and stood for his unquestioned spiritual authority over those within his canonical jurisdiction. Beginning with Antonio de Valdivieso, who in 1544 was murdered by Hernandez de Contreras, the venerable figure before me represents, in unbroken continuity, a line of forty-four prelates that stood for the conversion and civilization of the Nicaraguan Indians and the permanency of Christianity in Central America.

## WHERE BLOOD OF RACES MINGLES

Fully sixteen hundred people, representing all grades of society, were present at the Adorable Sacrifice, and yet so vast was the building that the congregation seemed small. I saw around me assembled in the unity of the faith Spaniards of the all-conquering Aryan stock; descendants of the mysterious African or Ethiopian race which probably antedates the deluge; the sons and daughters of the aboriginal American whose origin is lost in the darkness of a very remote past. Here also, and constituting the numerical strength of the congregation, were sambas, offspring of Indian and negro parentage, mulattoes, mestizos, quadroons, tercerons, and octo-rooms—multitudinous shades of black and white, of yellow and brown, “devout men out of every nation under Heaven.”

According to the law that “like begetteth like,” and “no one gives what he has not got,” each parent must have given to every one of those around me something of himself or herself. To the conservatism of the sons of Shem and the emotionalism of the daughters of Ham was added the aggressiveness and recuperative powers of the sons of Japheth, so conspicuously wanting to the descendants of Shem and Ham. Structurally, all these around me are the same, yet anatomically, morally and physiologically they differ. Yet in spite of all differences, they are of one species, of one common origin, which, biologically, means they sprang from one primitive pair. St. Paul two thousand years ago, addressing the Athenians on “the unknown God,”

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

long before anthropology became a science, taught the principle of the unity of the human race when he said, "God hath made of one all mankind, to dwell upon the face of the earth, determining the limits of their habitation."

The mysterious past was dissolving before me into the present, the prehistoric into the historic, and an entirely new type of the old races was in process of formation which the world never before saw, and may never see again. Here to-day, and around me, were the descendants of those who but a few hundred years back, on the west coast, or in the gloomy forests of equatorial Africa, or on the blood-soaked altars of Nicaragua, sacrificed their children and their prisoners of war to demons, drank the blood and feasted on the flesh of their human victims. We have only to go back four hundred years, less than six lives, when we reach the prehistoric line and cross it into the savagery of Africa or the barbarism of ancient America. And now I gazed upon these human variants with face and form, colour and brain altered, with new life, hopes and aspirations; everything of the old gone, except the specific sum of character by which a man is a man all the world over.

I looked down the avenue and vista of human history, down through the ages of time, to the dispersing of my race and its segregation into national units, and I recalled my vision and fixed it on these devout worshippers around me, that typed once again the reunion of the scattered fragments. It



## WHERE BLOOD OF RACES MINGLES!

was a notable portend of a converging towards a final reunion of the human family, of a return to a lost civilization, to a unity of adoration, when God's designs shall have received their entire accomplishment over the children of men. They had dropped their old brutality, their old savagery as moth-eaten garments fall away from the shoulders, and come here into the House of their Master as friends, each one arrayed in his "wedding garment." From the valley of the shadow of death, they came out at last, from monstrous cruelties, cannibalism, human sacrifices, from serpent adoration, from Vaudaux worship with its obscene rites, its sacrifice of children, its human blood drinking, its human flesh banquets, its violation of the rights of infancy, its degradation and prostitution of the sanctity of womanhood—from an awful night of darkness they came, and now stood in the bright light flooding them from the "orient Son of Justice."

Here and to-day, I thought, age is revered, infancy loved, manhood respected, womanhood honoured, and human life held sacred. Christianity, following the matchless teaching of its Christ, took the children of the man-eaters and those of the sacrificers of human life, and tamed the beastliness and ferocity of their savage natures. It invested the home with purity, redeemed the captive reserved for sacrifice, lifted the curse of slavery, put a stop to infanticide, preached the unity and sanctity of all mankind, and brought marriage once

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

again within the sacred domain of God, its founder. On these children it imposed a new law of conduct, new habits, new conceptions of life and society.

The sanctuary bell intimating the beginning of the canon of the mass, the entering upon the sacred mysteries, the "*mysteria divina*" of the early church, awoke me to myself. I heard the music of the great organ mingling with the voices of the descendants of the worshippers of the sun; I saw the Ethiopians, the Aztecs, the Spaniards, their commingled blood alive in the veins and arteries of those around them, sway forward and sink to their knees, and over all—over the prostrate multitude, over the spiritual chief and sacrificing priest—filling and flooding the mighty temple with its proclamation, I heard the voice of the angel singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, the heavens and earth are full of Thy glory. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee." I, too, fell upon my knees. From the snow-capped hills of the north, crossing mountain, sea and plain, I came, the son of a Norman Celt, and knelt, alone of my race, among these sons and daughters of Shem and Ham, at home in my Father's and their Father's House, claiming by our common humanity and our common faith my right to a seat at the banquet and my kinship to those who, with me, belonged to the "Household of the Faith."

After mass I joined the procession moving to the plaza, where the Sapadores' band every Sunday, from eleven to one, gives a concert of Spanish classical and Nicaraguan airs. The variety of the cos-

## WHERE BLOOD OF RACES MINGLES

tumes of the people, and of the soldiers and officers of the army, was bewildering. Never did I see a cleaner, a more deferential, or an apparently happier people. The plaza seats were occupied by rich and poor indiscriminately. There was no crowding, no rowdyism, or horse-play among the young. The promenades were alive with movement and animation, a kaleidoscope of flesh tints, bright colours, and flashing uniforms. The music was superb, for, say what we will, these Latin-Americans have the artistic instinct as a birth-gift. As I returned to my hotel I pondered over my experience and association with these warm-hearted people, and from my inmost heart I deplored their political feuds, their internecine wars, and regretted they had not a more permanent and stable government than a bastard republic.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### FROM THE TOWER OF LEON CATHEDRAL

There stood the hills not far, whose grisly tops  
Belched fire and rolling smoke,  
The work of sulphur.

—*Milton.*

LEON is a most attractive city with fine gardens, fine public buildings and a very affable and approachable people. I was told that the view from the cathedral tower was superb, and as I was to leave the city the following morning I took advantage of the quiet Sunday afternoon to pass a couple of hours on the tower. The cathedral is a massive and really magnificent pile, unsurpassed by any building in Latin America. It is a firm mass of masonry, built of cut stone, whose mortared joints have solidified into an imperishable material, forming, with the travertine, an indestructable whole. Its dignity and grace and quiet grandeur have given a new glory and importance to material substance, and brings home to the mind the sublime faith of the builders who raised this imperishable temple to an imperishable God. It covers an entire square, took thirty-seven years of incessant labour to build, and cost, I am told, five million dollars. Under a great dome, whose figured windows flood it with a wealth and variety of chromatic colouring, reposes

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

the High Altar of variegated marble, elaborately carved. The panelling of the altar is of silver plates, chased and embossed. The beautiful side chapels, the railings of Spanish marble, its lofty ceiling, and its great bells, mellowed with age, give to this consecrated fane an immortality of quiet grandeur and sacred romance.

In a spacious room opening into the vestry and known as the Bishops' Hall are hung the portraits in oil of all the prelates of Nicaragua, beginning with the saintly Valdivieso, the Thomas à Becket of Central America, and ending with the present occupant of the See of Leon, Monseigneur De Verrara, the forty-fourth since the foundation of the diocese in 1527. Some of these portraits are the productions of famous foreign artists, and even those of the native portrait painters hold your attention for a time. It is a room of historic memories—

“Where dedicated shapes of saints,  
Stern faces, bleared with unwearied watch,  
Look down, benignly grave, and seem to say:  
Ye come and go incessant, we remain  
Safe in the hallowed quiet of the past;  
Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot,  
Of faith so nobly realized as this.”

These paintings, if they had a voice, could tell the history of Central America from the conquest until now. They could record the heroic self-sacrifice of the Spanish missionary fathers who gave themselves to the splendid task of bearing life and hope and decency to the Pueblo tribes

## THE TOWER OF LEON CATHEDRAL

and roaming hordes from Patagonia to New Mexico. During the civil wars this cathedral was perverted into a fortress, and to this day every foot of its western wall shows the marks of bullets, and records the miserable marksmanship of the Nicaraguans. The rapacity of the revolutionists despoiled it of its ornaments and contributory wealth, their contempt for the House of God covering even the altar of sacrifice, which they stripped of its silver panels and candlesticks.

From the majestic towers of this imposing minster the view is magnificent. Nine of the twenty-four volcanic mountains of Nicaragua cut the horizon towards the Pacific Ocean and were sharply outlined against a background of delicate sky-blue. These destroyers of long ago are now cold, voiceless, and grimly silent, but some of them to-day are troubled in their sleep, and make known ominously, by the rising sulphurous smoke and the steam escaping from their cavernous depths, the fires blazing within them and the heat and power smouldering in their craters. The jaws of the monsters are yet foul with black gore, their shaggy ridges and huge lava muscles bearing witness to their desolating strength. Dominating all is the awful antiquity of what you are looking at—a sensation, as of old, finding utterance in that tremendous question of Eliphaz the Temanite to the unhappy Job, “Wast thou brought forth before the hills?” There was about them a weirdness that approached the ghostly and almost the ghastly.

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

The last great eruption of Masaya, the nearest to the city, happened about two hundred years ago, and so the people laugh at you if you speak of danger to come. They forget that two hundred years in the earth's life are but as two minutes in the life of a man, and that what a man did two minutes since he may do again. From our position we looked down upon the *Cuartel General* or army headquarters, the governor's residence, the bishop's palace, and the Tridentine College of St. Ramoan, established two hundred and thirty years ago. We could see the sentries pacing back and forth before the Government House and the general's quarters, the people in the plaza and a long line of *burros* or donkeys freighted with fodder for the cavalry stables. Up through the lambent air there came to us strange noises, indefinable sounds, heard only by those lifted above a large city. Far away to the east and north-east as far as the eye could carry were the dark blue waters of the Pacific, and between it and us were the wonderful forests of mahogany, the great cattle ranches, and the *haciendas* of the land owners. We could see as we looked southward the aureole of strangely beautiful palms around the lake of Managua, the orange groves, and coffee plantations, the cabins of the farm hands clustering into villages.

It was well on in the afternoon when we left the tower, and as the sun sank lower, the west changed to crimson, bringing out the royal palms of Managua in bold relief against the sky. Now



## THE TOWER OF LEON CATHEDRAL

dipped the sun behind the horizon, a horizon of rich, golden, salmon pink, merging into the deep blue of turquoise, and finally into the cold gray of evening through which the stars shone with strange and almost material lustre. On my return to the hotel I had for my *vis-à-vis* at the dinner table Dr. René Gaurez, who had come down from Cordova to attend a medical convention. He was a distinguished-looking man of forty or thereabouts, with courteous manners, spoke various languages, and was an encyclopædia of information on Central America. He subscribed for the *Lancet*, and was well informed on English therapeutics, praised the king for his deep and sympathetic interest in the study now being made of cancer, and Sir Thomas Lipton for his munificent contribution to the hospital established by His Majesty for the treatment of this disease. Our conversation drifted into a discussion on the diseases peculiar to cold climates. I told him of the efforts we were making to fight consumption—the “White Plague,” as it was popularly known among us. “White Plague,” he repeated, “a very appropriate name for a most insidious and treacherous disease. Among us we have found lemon juice to be a most efficient remedy for consumption in its primary and secondary stages, and an excellent remedy in all pulmonary diseases.”

To my question touching its preparation the doctor replied:

“To extract all the acid from lemons they ought

## DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS

to be boiled. Put them in cold water and boil slowly till you are satisfied the lemons are softening. Then spoon them out of the water and with a squeezer extract the juice. Now to the juice give enough sugar—not too much—to make it palatable. Then add twice as much water as there is juice of lemon.”

“Is this boiling done every day?” I asked the doctor.

“This preparation,” he replied, “may be made each day or enough may be prepared to last a week, but then it must be corked and kept in a cool place.”

“And what’s the dose, sir?”

“Ah, that,” said he, “is left to the discretion of each one, but four or five glassfuls in the twenty-four hours is the usual quantity.” Dr. Gaurez believed that between the lungs and kidneys there was a deep and sympathetic interest.

## INDEX



# INDEX

## A

- ALAMEDA GARDENS, of Mexico City, 88, 89  
 Alteroche, Rev. Jean, describes the destruction of St. Pierre, 79-82  
 Alvaredo, Pedro de, Spanish adventurer, 102, 148, 149, 156  
 Aspinwall, *see* Colon  
 Atlantis, legendary island, 54  
 Avila, Gil d', his attempt to conquer Nicaragua, 204, 205; appointed its first governor, 205; his death, 205, 206  
 Azores, the, islands of, 5; their situation and population, 5; discovery, 7; the inhabitants of, 8, 9, 30, 31  
 Aztec chiefs, story of the torture of, 92-4  
 Azul Lake, 20

## B

- Bacalhau*, the national dish among the Azoreans, 16  
 Balboa, Vasco de, Spanish discoverer, 135  
 Bandelier, Adolf, 3, 4, 149  
 Basse-Terre, capital of Guadeloupe, 41  
 Bermuda, island of, 49  
 Boca de Inferno, 23  
 Bogotá, capital of Colombia, 125  
 Bull fights in Mexico City, 117-23

## C

- "CALENDAR STONE," 103  
 Camoëns, Luiz de, Portuguese poet, 13  
 Campeachy, Gulf of, 143  
 Canary Islands, the, 7

- Capellas, the valley of, 14, 15  
 Caribbean Sea, 34, 51, 208  
 Catherwood, Frederick, artist, 164  
 Ceiba, the, a sacred tree, 54, 55  
 Central America, the ruined cities of, 148, 164; the inland towns of, 168; a land of civil wars and political uprisings, 198, 199; the confederation of, 199, 200  
 Chagres River, 129  
 Chapultepec, summer residence of President Diaz, 90, 103  
 Chaves, Hernandez de, 189  
 Chichen Itza, ruined city of Central America, 137, 138, 148, 151  
 Cholula, town of Mexico, 111-13; the pyramid of, 113-16  
 Cintra Michaleuse, 18  
 Colon, or Aspinwall, city of Colombia, 127, 132, 136  
 Columbus, the statue of, 91, 92  
 Conto, Marquis do, 27  
 Contreras, Hernandez de, 206, 207, 212  
 Copan, the ruined city of, 163, 182-6  
 Copan River, 163, 167, 182  
 Cordova, city in Nicaragua, 203, 205  
 Cordova, Hernandez de, 203, 204, 205  
 Cortez, Hernando, conqueror of Mexico, 88, 101, 102, 138; his march from Mexico City to the Bay of Honduras, 155-62  
 Creole, the, 45; the origin of, in the West Indies, 46, 47; his standing in Guadeloupe and Martinique, 48  
 Cribo snake, 44  
 Culebra Mountain, 129

# INDEX

## D

DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO, Bernal, Spanish historian, 94, 111, 155, 160  
Díaz, President, of Mexico, 90, 122  
Dominica, West Indian island, 41

## E

EL MUERTE, the Pichu-Coatle viper, 174, 175  
El Paso, Texas, 85

## F

FAYAL, island of the Azores, 17  
*Fer-de-lance*, a deadly snake, 41-4  
Fogarty, Father, 37, 38  
Fonte Bella, Marquis de, 25  
Fort de France, civil capital of Martinique, 63, 71, 72, 73, 77, 82  
Frontera, port of Yucatan, 144, 146  
Furnas, the town of, 17, 19; its public baths, 23  
Furnas, the valley of, 11; the volcanic eruption there, in 1522, 18-22

## G

*Glorietas*, 89, 90, 91  
Guadeloupe, West Indian island, 41; the reptiles of, 42-5; the inhabitants of, 45-8  
Guatemala, republic of Central America, 137, 140; the vampires of, 147; the ruined cities of, 148, 149; the kingdom of, under the Spanish régime, 199  
Guatemala City, 171  
Guatemozin, last of the Montezumas, his statue, 92, 156

## H

HIDALGO, patriot priest, 98, 103  
Honduras, the great forest of, 178-80  
Honduras, Bay of, 153, 163  
Horta, a seaport of Fayal, 17  
Humboldt, Friedrich von, German explorer, 106, 114

## I

IZTACCHIHUATL, volcano of Mexico, 110

## L

LA BREA, the Lake of Pitch, 55-8  
Lagoa Foco, 21  
Lagoa Grande, 20  
Lagoa Secca, 20  
Lalemant, Father, 191  
Largo do Ioão Franco, 29  
La Soufrière, volcano, 33, 36, 41  
Lemuria, imaginary submerged continent, 54  
Leon, capital of Nicaragua, 197; the old city of, 203, 205; sacked and rebuilt, 206; again destroyed, 207; abandoned and a new city built, 207; looted by Captain Dampier, 208; becomes a revolutionary storm-centre, 209; the cathedral of, 219  
Le Plongeon, French antiquarian, 105, 114, 139  
Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 130, 131  
Lesser Antilles, the, 34  
Lomba da Cruz, 13  
Lummis, Charles F. professor, 3, 4

## M

MANAGUA, Lake, 206, 222  
Marie Gallante, West Indian island, 41  
Martinique, West Indian island, 61, 71, 82  
Mary, Father, 73, 77, 82  
Masaya, volcano of Nicaragua, 222  
Maya secret writings, 140, 186  
Mayas, Yucatan Indians, 139, 142, 149  
Merritt, Hamilton, 133  
Mexico City, 85; described, 86-92; its cathedral, 95-9; the National Museum, 99-104; the bull fights in, 117-23; the Spaniards' wonderful march from, to the Bay of Honduras, 153-62

# INDEX

Mitla, the ruins of, 105-10  
Moltke, Helmuth von, German general, 125  
Momotombo, volcano of, 206  
Mongoose, the, 43, 44  
Monte de Piedad, the Mexican national pawnshop, 88  
Montezuma, emperor of Mexico, 88, 100  
Mont Pelee, volcano, 64, 65; its great eruption of May 8th, 1902, 67-8  
Montserrat, the pearl of the Antilles, 33; swept by a hurricane, 35; its population, 36  
Morne d' Orange, 75, 80  
Morne La Croix, 77  
Morne Rouge, 73  
Morne Vert, 79, 81  
Morro dos Capellas, 12; the view from the summit of, 13, 14  
Motagua River, 163

## N

NATIONAL Museum of Mexico, 99-104, 141, 150  
Nicaragua, republic, 197; the field of blood of the republican states, 199; its first governor, 205, 206

## O

OAXACA, the valley of, 109  
Orinoco River, 51, 52, 53, 201  
Orizaba, Pico de, mountain, 110

## P

PALACIO, Don Diego Garcia de, 171  
Palencia, 146, 147  
Palenque, ruins of, 137, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150  
Palenque cross, the, 104, 150  
Panama, the isthmus of, its vegetation, 134-6  
Panama Canal, the, 129-34  
Panama City, described, 126-8, the temperature of, 136  
Panama Railroad, the, 127, 128

16

Paria, Gulf of, 51, 53  
Paseo de la Reforma, 90, 91  
Pico, highest peak of the Azores, 5  
Plymouth, capital of Montserrat, 33, 35, 38  
Ponta Delgada, town on the island of San Miguel, 11, 12, 15, 17, 25; the people of, 29  
Popocatepetl, volcano, 110  
Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad, 51, 53  
Porto Rico, 34  
Prêcheur River, 75, 78  
Puebla, capital of Mexico, 109, 110  
*Pulque*, the Mexican national drink, 85, 86  
Punta de la Brea, 58

## R

RAMALTRA, town on the island of San Miguel, 15  
Realejo River, 197, 201, 202  
*Riata*, a horsehair rope, 172, 173  
Romita Plaza, Mexico City, where the bull fights are held, 117  
Royal Quetzal, bird, 140, 150, 151

## S

ST. LUCIA, West Indian island, 42, 64  
St. Pierre, town of Martinique, 61, 62; before its destruction, 63; the remains of, 64; the socialistic demonstration which preceded its destruction, 65, 66; the destruction of, 68, 69; the ruins of, 74-7; the number who perished, 78  
Saintes, the, West Indian islands, 41  
Salta, 145, 146  
San Fernando, town of Trinidad, 51, 53, 54  
San Miguel, island of the Azores, 11, 15, 25  
San Pedro, 178  
Santa Maria, island of the Azores, 7, 16  
Sêche River, 76

# INDEX

Serpent worship, 191, 192  
 Sierra Madre Mountains, 116  
 Somosa, Bernabe, rebel chief, 198  
*Sopa secca*, 16  
 Spaniards, the, their wonderful  
 march from the City of Mexico  
 to the Bay of Honduras, 153-62  
 Stephens, John Lloyd, 163, 164

## T

TABASCO, ruins, of, 137  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 162  
 Teocalli, the, Aztec temple, 87, 95,  
 102  
 The Holy Metropolitan Church of  
 Mexico, 95-9; its celebrated paint-  
 ings, 98  
 Thieves' Market, of Mexico City, 88  
 Tlalpan, ruined city of Central  
 America, 148  
 Toluca, town of Guatemala, 138  
 Tres Cruces, 138  
 Tridentine College of St. Ramoan,  
 222  
 Trinidad, West Indian island, its  
 situation, 51, 53; its famous Lake  
 of Pitch, 55-8  
 Trois Ponts, suburbs of St. Pierre, 74

## U

USUMACINTO River, 144, 145  
 Uxmal, Yucatan, 104, 148; the  
 ruins of, 149, 150

## V

VALDIVIESO, Antonio de, bishop of  
 Nicaragua, 206, 212, 220  
 Valle dos Templos, 110  
 Vera Cruz, city of Mexico, 143  
 Verrara, Monseigneur de, bishop of  
 Leon, 212, 220  
 Villa Franca, town on the island of  
 San Miguel, 19

## Y

YUCA PLAINS, 166, 167  
 Yucatan, its ruins and ancient  
 people, 137-42; its vegetation,  
 145, 146; the vampires of, 147;  
 the ruined cities of, 148, 149; its  
 ruined temples, 151, 152

## Z

ZOCALO, the, of Mexico City, 86, 87  
 Zacatecas, town of Mexico, 85













